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HYDROPATHY:

OR,

HYGIENIC MEDICINE.

HYDROPATHY:

OR,

HYGIENIC MEDICINE.

An Explanatory Essay.

BY

EDWARD W. LANE, M.A., M.D. EDIN.

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

I CANNOT too strongly forewarn the reader that the following Essay is not to be regarded as, in any sense, making even an attempt to give a systematic account of the hydro-therapeutic system of cure. That has been already so ably and so fully done in the admirable work of Dr. Gully, in Dr. Wilson's able treatises, and in the sagacious and lucid writings of Dr. Edward Johnson, as to leave nothing, in the meanwhile, to be desiderated in that direction. It has often struck me, however, that a short treatise, in which the rational grounds of hygienic medicine, and, in immediate connexion with this, the present position of the medical art, should be briefly set forth, might not be without value—and it has been very much with a view to that object that this Essay has been written.

b

On more personal grounds, I intend it also as a confession of medical faith. But by far my strongest motive for publishing it has rested on the hope that possibly, by a fair and candid statement of my opinions in regard to the present condition of medicine and its prospects, I might assist, however feebly, in bringing about that reconciliation between the practitioners of old physic and the more modern natural school, which is so desirable at once for the interests of medicine and the welfare of society—and I can truly say that, feeling so strongly the importance of this reconciliation as I do, I should be more than happy if I could flatter myself that I had contributed ever so little in bringing it about.

E. W. L.

May, 1857.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

IT will be observed that in the present edition the second part of the title of this work, viz. "the *natural* system of medical treatment," has been changed into its equivalent, *Hygienic Medicine*. This has been done to avoid the ambiguity of the word *natural*; for while I meant to indicate by that expression the treatment of disease chiefly by means of the *natural agents*, air, exercise, water, diet, and nervous repose, others have not been slow in construing the term into one of reproach, as though it had been used to stigmatize all other medical systems as *un-natural*. It need scarcely be announced that this could not have been my intention in a work the very reverse of polemic in its spirit and design; one, indeed, in which the chief object has been, from a deep sense of the wisdom, justice, and propriety of such a course, to seek to allay the

viii PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

remains of irritable party feeling, where it still exists, and to offer my views to the great body of my professional brethren, if with the earnestness that belongs to conviction, yet in the spirit of moderation that should characterize inquiries everywhere beset with so great and various difficulties.

With this prefatory explanation, it only remains to say, that, in order to avoid the too constant repetition of the same word, throughout the following pages I have used the appellatives, natural, hydropathic, and hygienic, without distinction, as equivalents.

June, 1859.

CONTENTS.

General misconception and unfair appreciation of Hydropathy :

	PAGE
1. As a system of Therapeutics, it is comparatively new	2
2. Its name incorrect and misleading, because inadequate	3
The explanation of this found in the history of the origin of the system	4
Why not change the name ? The difficulties connected with such a step	17

The question, What is Hydropathy really ?

How is lost health to be regained ? the question which Medi- cine has to answer	21
How it has mostly answered it	22
The Pharmacopœia	23
Physiology the ground-work of the Science of Medicine	26
The popular Therapeutics	27
Hydropathy	31

The great bulk of diseases divided, for practical purposes, into two classes :—1. Those charac- terized by a superabundance of vital power ;

2. Those characterized by a deficiency of the
same :

	PAGE
1st Class : The method of treatment	37
2nd Class : More important, because larger than the former	47
The usual history of this class of cases illustrated by an example	50
The ordinary treatment	52
The general plan of the Hydropathic treatment	53
Organic diseases	64
Pulmonary Consumption	66
Its Pathology	67
Its treatment	79
The natural treatment of <i>all</i> chronic diseases analogous to that of Consumption	94

Characteristic features of the manner of carrying
out the natural or hydropathic system in
practice :

The institution of establishments	95
Their advantages, physical and moral	97

General view of the stand-point and pretensions of
Hydropathy :

It is no panacea	102
----------------------------	-----

The present state of Medicine:

The transition visible	108
Growing tendency to abandon the heroic treatment, and rely on Hygiene	109

CONTENTS.

xi

	PAGE
The testimony of some of the great living authorities in the profession :	
Dr. Williams	112
Mr. Quain	113
Dr. Hughes Bennett	118
Sir John Forbes	121
Other indications of the new movement	130
The great reform in Medicine to be effected by the younger men in the profession	137
How Medicine promised to advance	146
The adoption of Hydropathy in towns	155

HYDROPATHY;

OR,

HYGIENIC MEDICINE.

AFTER the lapse of twenty years since the introduction of Hydropathy into England,—after it has been extensively written about, and has been the talk of thousands who have benefited by its appliances, and have endeavoured by a rehearsal of their own experiences, (perhaps not always judiciously set forth,) to extend the bounds of its usefulness,—after having been scoffingly attacked by the orthodox medical press, and as repeatedly defended by its own converts, it may perhaps seem strange, if anything of the kind were so, that the system should still be not only imperfectly known, but often ridiculously misunderstood; and rarely if ever appreciated, either by the medical profession or the general public, with impartiality and fairness. Why

B

this has been so has proceeded from a variety of causes, of which I shall now endeavour to indicate the principal.

First, Hydropathy as a system of therapeutics, and considered apart from general hygiene, is comparatively new, and it will not be surprising to those who are acquainted with the history of human opinion, that it has had to struggle against the whole banded conservatism of the medical profession, in the first place, and of the great majority of the general public, who, in such matters, are very naturally and uninquiringly led by it. In this Hydropathy has only fared, and will probably continue to fare for many a long day, like new systems of every kind, and he would have been a sanguine man indeed who should have looked for any different result. The unfailing ordeal had to be undergone here, too, as in other directions, of open contempt and aversion first, proceeding from downright selfish prejudice; of honest incredulity next, on the part of many who disbelieve without sufficient inquiry;—all this preparatory to the later stage of “damning with faint praise,” itself the invariable pre-

cursor of an unwilling, not very graceful, but compulsory final acceptance. That is pretty much the order, I think, in which the strongholds of prejudice generally yield to the invincible sap of truth. It is unnecessary to cull instances from the history of every human science and art to vindicate this position: all the world knows them, and it would be a mere waste of time to go over anew a field so often trodden before, however painfully instructive and interesting might be the result presented to the reader. Suffice it to repeat, by way of explanation, that Hydropathy, as a systematic means of cure, is still new, and has had, by consequence, to battle its way into notice, step by step, as a simple matter of course.

But, secondly, and as an additional impediment, it is unfortunate enough that the very term "Hydropathy" is a palpable misnomer. That term not only does not give a correct and complete (or rather correct *because* complete) view of the system which is practised under the name, but it has a tendency to mislead the great bulk of the public, who cannot be expected,

especially in matters of science, to follow things beyond the veriest surface, and who certainly do not. "What's in a name?" To the many, often a very great deal—nay, everything. The more reason, therefore, that accuracy should be observed on this point at least. Hydropathy, I repeat, is a misnomer—only one degree more correct than its ordinary synonyme, "The Cold Water Cure." The former designation is faulty because of its incompleteness, because it in no-wise indicates the sum total of the treatment pursued under it; the latter is a degree worse, inasmuch as it not only does not convey the whole truth on the subject, but is calculated, as I shall show in the sequel, to give an impression which is actually in a large degree false. In short, the one term is negatively erroneous and mischievous, the other is very positively so. Such is the anomalous predication under which this most rational and scientific system, along with those who cultivate it in our day, unhappily labours.

But the explanation is not difficult. It was the fortune of the new method of cure to be discovered by a man of singular natural ge-

nious and of a penetrative sagacity rarely surpassed. His natural insight was only equalled by his power of patient and continuous observation, and by his capacity for generalizing correctly from the facts he observed. Such a man was this natural sage, the Silesian peasant, Vincent Priessnitz. To this humbly born practical philosopher was it reserved, in an age stiff with the learning of the schools, to work out, establish, and promulgate to the world in the most convincing of forms, a system of medical treatment, so simply beautiful in its fundamental principles as well as in its details, so free from mysticism and dogmatic jargon, and, when rightly understood, so entirely based on physiological science, that it could not fail to arrest the attention of all rational, unprejudiced, and uncompromised men. All honour to the memory of this great benefactor of his kind for the boon he conferred on our common humanity. Eternal thanks to him for the services he rendered to the healing art.

Priessnitz, however, was not only fallible like other mortals, but, as the organizer of a

new system, he laboured under disadvantages, from lack of scientific education, for which no amount of natural endowment could possibly compensate. For science comes not by intuition. It is the accumulated experience, generalized into law, of whole generations of thinking men who have devoted themselves to its study; and an intimate acquaintance with it, therefore, is absolutely indispensable for him who would establish any scientific system on a permanent unshakeable basis. And nowhere is this more true than in the province of medicine. A man of intellect, indeed, may spring up from among the laity, and, by the simple force of unaided genius, may seize upon a great idea, in any department connected with medicine, which had escaped the whole array of its legitimate professors. Priessnitz did so; and he did more—he actually realized it in practice to a large extent and to the benefit of hundreds of his fellow-beings. But he accomplished this, so far as theory was concerned, not by an inductive chain of scientific reasoning, suggested by, and resulting from, an extended medical experience, but

through the agency of a tacit logic, irresistible to himself, and practically full of good fruits. His natural instinct, fortified by personal observation alone, led him direct to the right thing. It certainly was an inspiration to be admired and wondered at.

Very different was it, however, when Priess-nitz, attempting to undertake the vocation of a practical physician, ventured to deal with the more subtle phases of disease, or to embody in a scientific form, and explain to scientific students and investigators, the faith that was in him and guided his practice. In both these cases the scientific education became absolutely indispensable, and he had it not. Accordingly, we are prepared for mistakes of every kind, and we too surely have them. First, mistakes in practice. With all his acuteness, who is there that has the least acquaintance with the subject and does not see, irrespectively of his knowledge of the actual fact, that it must have been so; that he must have committed again and again errors of the gravest nature in his treatment of disease, not only because of the crude methods

with which he often experimented, but much more because of his absolute inability to diagnose correctly hundreds upon hundreds of the cases that were brought before him. How indeed could it possibly be otherwise? He had not, before he began to practise, gone through the laborious process of studying disease by the bedside—the indispensable condition of such knowledge. He was utterly ignorant of everything that could deserve the name of a scientific knowledge of such diseases as those of the lungs, the heart, the brain, and entire nervous system. And yet, with the rashness and presumption of untutored genius, and strong only in his self-reliance, he did not hesitate to undertake the cure of these, nay, of all diseases. In such circumstances, it need not be told to any man of sense, least of all to a medical man, that Priessnitz, in his character of physician, must necessarily have been guilty of most serious errors in practice. Were it not so, medicine must needs be a sorry farce indeed. But that his errors were far more than counterbalanced by a splendid array of cases of successful cure—many of them of an

extraordinary character, and from every quarter of Europe, is of itself the highest eulogium that could be passed on the system he practised, for it is quite certain that the general efficiency of that system turned the balance decisively in his favour, in spite of every personal disadvantage.

But if, from want of scientific knowledge, he was often wrong in practice, Priessnitz, it will be easily understood, was still oftener wrong when he attempted to deal scientifically with theory, even where his theory was correct. By a flash of original conception, he had laid hold of a grand and bold idea of medical treatment, and that idea he had the rare happiness to carry out into practice himself, with a whole train of disciples. But there, unlettered as he was, he had to stop. It was no part of his privilege to be enabled to expound to the scientific world, and in the language of science, the new organon of which he was the herald and the practical exponent; and wherever he attempted it, he failed. Stumbling at the very threshold, he called the new system "The Water Cure," wrongly and

unphilosophically, but yet accountably enough. Undoubtedly the main ideas associated with the new treatment appeared to centre round the systematic use of water, administered, internally and externally, in such manner and quantity as had never been dreamt of before. Water, to his apprehension, was thought to take the place, and stand in complete lieu, of the old drug medication, which it supplanted. And, in a certain measure, this was no doubt true; but whatever be the extraordinary virtues of water as a curative agent, in the varied forms of its administration to the human economy, both locally and constitutionally, it assuredly would never have occurred to any physiologist to give the whole of this credit to the one element of water alone, passing over the equally important agents of air, exercise, and diet, for the body, and healthy moral influences for the mind. When the day arrives, indeed, which shall see the effects of pure water in disease tested with the same accuracy that is now bestowed on the most insignificant drug, it will be found that, according to its temperature, the manner and

quality of its application, and the length of time during which it is used, water serves the following important therapeutic purposes, at least, among others, viz., those of a diluent and a laxative; of a diuretic, diaphoretic, sedative, and derivative; of an anodyne and febrifuge; of the very best tonic when cold; and, in its various warm applications, of the best and safest reducer of congestion and inflammation.* Nevertheless, it cannot be too strongly insisted on, as a scientific fact, that it is *the whole* of the above agents, in their plenary combination and harmonious working together, which go to constitute the means whereby what is termed Hydropathy really works its cures; while they also constitute the true characteristic difference between the old system of medical treatment and the new—between the more artificial and too often empirical treatment by drugs, and those other and simpler means which we

* See on this subject the very able treatise of Dr. Howard F. Johnson—a work conceived and written after the true scientific manner, entitled, "Researches into the Effects of Cold Water upon the Healthy Body, to illustrate its Action in Disease. Longmans, 1850."

designate by the title of *natural*; because, whereas they are of nature's own choosing for the preservation of the human being in health, so also, when used in an intensified degree, they constitute the most efficient weapons that art can employ to restore him when he has fallen away from the observance of the natural laws.

From what has just been said, therefore, it will be seen how inadequately the terms "Water Cure" and "Hydropathy" express the treatment pursued under these synonyms; and it can hardly be sufficiently deplored that the natural system of medical treatment, made up of so many concurrent and inter-dependent appliances, should ever have received any such designation. In reference to the ultimate success of the system, through its general recognition by the profession and the public, I hold this to be a matter of the greatest importance, and I cannot help always feeling that a very large portion of the value of Priessnitz's gift was really abstracted by the unscientific and wholly one-sided appellation which, in his utter

ignorance of physiology, he was pleased to confer upon it.

The truth is, (and it is most important to draw attention to the fact,) that the real source of much of the confusion existing in the minds of medical men and the world at large on the nature of Hydropathy arises from not clearly distinguishing between its employment as a local and as a constitutional agent. In the former case, as is seen every day in the surgical wards of our hospitals, where the plain water-dressing is so much in use, it is intelligible how the one element of water should be supposed to represent the entire system; but the instant we pass from the province of Surgery to that of Medicine, and have to effect cures not topically, but by acting mainly on the general constitution, on the blood, it becomes at once apparent that we then employ water, as a most important element, indeed; but that it is only in its physiological connexion with air, exercise, and the other agents of the hygienic system, that its true value consists. Of these combined means, contributing severally to the cure of

disease, and each essential to it, it is enough to state that it would be impossible to assign a superior value to any over the rest, the simple fact being that each is indispensable, and that disease is cured under the Hydropathic system not by one of the number alone, but through the combined remedial influences of all.

It falls to my lot, of course, nearly every day, to witness the general idea entertained by a very large portion of the public in regard to the nature of the water-cure, and the establishments where it is practised—an idea derived very mainly from the unqualified predominance of the one element of *water* in the name which characterizes the treatment. It amounts to something like this. To the minds of a large number of persons, a water-cure establishment is a country retreat for patients, where a kind of merry inquisition goes on from morning to night, a jocular torture in sport. The patients are pictured as everlastingly gibbering in cold and wet sheets, in a state, it must be presumed, of the highest discomfort, to say the least, and only tolerable to poor deluded mortals who have

well nigh parted with their senses; while the end of all is the aggravation of their several complaints, accompanied, in the imagination, with pet cases of sudden death and horrors unspeakable. I am drawing no caricature. I am only stating a fact which comes constantly within my own knowledge, and which the candid will admit, is not overstated. So much for the name of water-cure (or *cold* water-cure, by way of amelioration,) on the minds of the mass of the credulous, unscientific, and prejudiced public.

With the profession it is not much better, and with less excuse. Every rational medical man knows perfectly well that the water-cure is a misnomer, and is quite aware that the treatment at hydropathic establishments, conducted as they now are, in every instance, by competently educated practitioners, who have reputations to support,* does not consist

* It is hardly necessary to state that the provisions of the New Medical Act are a boon, and will be a protection, to the practitioners of Hydropathy, as well as every other branch of Medicine, and that, henceforth, the public have at least the guarantee that every one practising Hydropathy *must* have obtained, in the usual legitimate manner, a medical degree or surgical diploma.

solely, nor even mainly, often, of the various applications of water. He knows it to be something very different; but yet I fear that the instances are rare of physicians possessing sufficient candour, disinterestedness, and genuine love of truth, to induce them to forget a foolish name in their appreciation of a wise and beneficent thing. There is no remedy but one, and that is time. Time alone, there can be no doubt,

Time, the corrector, where our judgments err,
The test of truth, love, sole philosopher,

will avail to try the genuineness of this creed as of all others, and we and our successors must even abide the issue patiently, for beyond a certain slow pace its progress will assuredly not be driven. Nevertheless, it surely lies at the door of Hydropathic practitioners to explain their creed so fully and clearly, both as to its scientific basis and the true manner of its practical operation, as to leave no valid excuse for misconception on the part of objectors of whatever kind, lay or medical. I wish I could add my belief that this has at all been satisfactorily done.

But, it may naturally be asked, "If the name which designates your treatment be incorrect, insufficient, and misleading, why not at once change it?" I answer, It is by no means easy; nay, except to a man prepared to risk a fortune in the attempt, it would be impossible. Unhappily, we received the terms hydropathy and water-cure as a legacy from Priessnitz, the recognised founder of the system, and these epithets have now become so identified with the peculiar kind of therapeutic treatment pursued under them, that, for the interests of greater scientific truth and accuracy, to attempt a change of name, would, practically, be almost tantamount to starting a new system—a new system, with its new converts to be slowly indoctrinated, and its new public to be slowly, slowly got together. It is hardly to be done.

So strongly, however, does the writer of these pages feel on this subject, that when, in pursuance of a long-cherished wish, he was about to establish an institution for the treatment of disease on hygienic principles, he at one time determined to do so under an altered

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name—a name which should really convey an adequate idea of the system—and accept the chances of failure arising out of a non-recognition of his attempt. But he soon discovered that in point of fact there is no one single name which could have been pressed into his service as in itself conveying a *bonâ fide* impression of the hygienic method of cure, and co-extensive with it, and which should at the same time have been quite intelligible to the public. The term “hygienic medicine” might undoubtedly have supplied the desideratum, and is indeed by far the best and most comprehensive title that could be found, but it has long been so much prostituted by impostors of every kind, that it could not, at present, be safely allowed to stand by itself. Accordingly, the attempt was abandoned, and the usual name retained; not without a strong conviction, however, that a time will come when all such special designations will no longer be needed;—when they will have become lost under the influences of a more catholic spirit;—and when under the wholesome influences of a more mature reflection, a more extended acquain-

tance with physiological and pathological laws, and, above all, a more enlightened professional candour, the whole medical world will be united together. When that day does arrive, when the strife of contending parties—if necessary, perhaps, in the meantime for the attainment of truth—shall have been finally played out, and the reconciliation above pointed at shall have been realized, it may possibly be legitimate to hope that the simple term *physician* may be held sufficient to designate a qualified member of the medical profession, and that, with this title fairly won, it may be left to the judgment and discretion of each such member to treat his patients to the best of his conscientious conviction, without incurring thereby the jealousy, if not the odium, of his fellow-practitioners, and without being dubbed by some narrow and quasi characteristic title supposed to represent his particular *pathy*.

I have spoken above of what Hydropathy is not—it is not the *Water-Cure*; and I now proceed to indicate what it truly is, and what are the simple, natural methods by which it works its cures.

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It is agreed on all hands, that there are certain fundamental conditions proper to the physical well-being of man, and every one must allow, as a matter of individual experience, that health is maintained or lost in exact proportion as these fundamental laws are observed or violated. This is one of the first important truths, in reference to our physical organization, which gradually dawn upon us as we pass from the state of unreflective childhood and adolescence into the more sober and reasoning era of matured manhood and womanhood. Often a very costly experience has forced the lesson upon us; an experience founded on broken health and untimely decrepitude, even before the natural powers have come, or should have come, to their full growth. We then find that in our manner of life we have violated, sometimes through ignorance, sometimes in spite of better knowledge, certain organic laws, in obedience to which alone can the human being possibly enjoy physical health. Experience, I say, that bitter instructress, has taught us this lesson; for, alas! in our age of the world, she is, in

such matters, too often the only teacher. Our youth do not learn such insignificant knowledge in our great public schools. There, in crude jargon, the ghosts of two dead languages mostly reign supreme, while a knowledge of nature and her ordinances, so far as relates to bodily health, has not yet been deemed a sufficiently important or interesting study to claim even a moderate share of that precious period in the history of every individual which is dedicated to lay the foundation of all future distinction, usefulness, and happiness.

Man, then, having sinned directly or indirectly, wilfully or ignorantly (and nature does not recognise the distinction), against the laws established for the maintenance of his physical powers, suffers for his disobedience in the loss of health, the first of earthly blessings. Having lost, how is he most likely to regain, it? On the answer to that question is based the characteristic difference of all medical creeds.

Every one is aware of the fact that from the days of Hippocrates and Galen down to our own time, or during a period of no less than

2300 years, the treatment of disease has consisted principally of drug medication in one form or another. Indeed, it scarcely seems ever to have occurred to men that anything else in the way of remedy was possible. Once diseased, the human body was to be "put through its purgations," or undergo the effects of drugs in some shape or other, before it could have a chance of recovery. At first sight, and from the vantage-ground which we now occupy, this may perhaps seem singular, but a very little reflection will suffice to show that it ought not to be a matter for wonderment. On the contrary, that it was not only natural but inevitable, and that a different medical philosophy, with a different practice, would have argued an advancement of scientific knowledge in general, and an acquaintance with human physiology in particular, that could not by possibility belong to any but a most enlightened age.

We do not need to consult the ancient history of the healing art to be made aware that the medicaments in use by the early inhabitants of the earth consisted exclusively, in

the first instance, of simples—not very different probably from the cowslip-wine and other innocent nostrums of our modern benevolent ladies. As might be expected, we see the very same thing prevail to this day among the savage tribes of the American forests and the natives of South Africa. This was, in fact, the first natural step of empirical practice, and it is, perhaps, not too much to say, when one considers the abuse of medicine in ignorant hands, and its consequences to the public health, that, on the whole, it would have been a real boon to mankind if it had stopped here. In process of time, however, the vegetable kingdom did not suffice to satisfy man's wants or his morbid curiosity, and the mineral world became gradually ransacked, in its turn, for therapeutic agencies—the two yielding together, in due time, that goodly storehouse of medicines (including nearly every known poison,) that is familiar to us all under the name of the "Pharmacopœia."

There can be no question that this was by far the most natural direction for the Art of Medicine to take in its first beginnings. I

call it Art emphatically, for assuredly it did not merit the name of Science—a term which can barely be conceded to it even in our own day. The course of the *Art of Medicine*, I say, was alike natural and inevitable, for the *Science of Physiology*, the philosophy on which it should have been built, did not exist. Was there not something, moreover, exquisitely captivating to the human imagination in the supposed occult mysterious working of drugs? What a scope was there here for that mystic tendency more or less inherent in us all, and how has it worked, from the first dawnings of medicine, through the long twilight of the middle age, with its sore struggles after the elixir vitæ, and other cloud phantoms innumerable,—up to the present time!

Physiology was unknown. Consider for a moment what the world's knowledge of physiological laws was, so late even as half a century ago. I speak not here of the general public alone, but of the medical profession. The great discovery of Harvey, indeed, which may be regarded as the starting-point of modern medicine, had been made so long as a

century and a half anterior to that date, but still it is notorious that, as a science, and compared with what it is now, physiology may almost be said to have had no proper existence at that epoch. It was in the veriest embryo state. Few of those great discoveries had yet dawned upon us which are gradually revolutionizing medicine in our times. Digestion, circulation, respiration, innervation—all the animal functions were imperfectly understood. What knowledge there was on these subjects at all was loose, vague, and inaccurate, as any one may discover who chooses to read the physiological treatises of the time. This great and important field had been explored with comparatively small fruit indeed; and so it was with pathology and pathological chemistry—sciences, so to speak, of yesterday, notwithstanding their vast importance towards a due comprehension of disease and its rational treatment. To enable us, indeed, to realize, in a small degree, the achievements of modern times in these collateral provinces of Medicine, we have only to imagine such names as the following, with the discoveries belonging to

them respectively, abstracted from the bead-roll of science. Among the chemists—Davy, Prout, Liebig, Dumas; among the anatomists and physiologists—Sir Charles Bell, Magendie, Müller, Bichat, Marshall Hall, and what a blank would not be occasioned! When it is remembered, further, that all these men have flourished in the present century, and that two of them are actually alive still and at work, a more striking notion may be gathered of the meagre materials in existence before their day for the construction of a system of medicine on a scientific basis.

Now, in our modern schools of medicine, physiology is regarded as by far the most important branch of the theory or institutes of the science. In the University of Edinburgh, indeed, which in point of scientific advancement is certainly second to none, physiology is taught under its twin name, the “Institutes of Medicine.” And most philosophically and significantly so; for does any rational man doubt that physiology is the necessary groundwork of the science of medicine, the sole and only avenue by which it can possibly be ap-

proached? It is the true keystone of the arch, the scaffolding of the building, upon which all the rest repose. In considering the philosophy of medicine, I start with this as a fundamental and unassailable proposition. And what is the necessary deduction? Surely this, that not until physiology had made considerable advance, not until physiological laws had become familiar to medical men, and their meaning and importance in connexion with practical therapeutics duly recognised and appreciated, was it possible to construct an art of medicine on anything like a true scientific basis. But what do the facts say? What does the history of medicine teach us? If the art of therapeutics had been reared on a philosophical foundation, we should have expected to find it resting on physiology, using it as a guide, proceeding upon its broad simple dictates, regarding it as indeed the true institutes of medicine, indispensable to its very existence as a philosophical system. Is it so? Of course I do not ask the question to be answered by the mere dispenser of drugs, who, under various denominations, makes his

bread in England by the treatment of all disease alike, acute and chronic, through the agency of powerful medicines, dealt out as a matter of the purest routine, and with all the easy confidence of an unreflecting empiricism. I ask the educated and enlightened physician, the man of reflection and impartiality, who values truth more than even success in life (and an abundance of such there are), whether he thinks in his heart that medicine, as it has hitherto been practised, and is still practised by the ordinary routinists of the profession in our time, is indeed rational in its method—whether it is based on sound notions of physiology—whether, indeed, it has grown out of definite scientific principles of any kind whatsoever, or is, on the contrary, to a very large extent, the result of a system of blind experimentation, unedifying to every philosophical mind, insecure in its results, often actually damaging to the human frame, even in those very cases where it would appear at first sight to have been successful?

“It is not unworthy of remark,” says Liebig, in reference to this subject, “that

many physicians profess to hold chemistry in contempt, exactly as they do with physiology: that medicine reproaches physiology, and with equal injustice, as she reproaches chemistry. The physician who has learned medicine, not as a science, but as an empirical art, acknowledges no principle, but only *rules* derived from experience. The object of his inquiries is only whether a remedy, in any given case, had a good or a bad effect. This is all the empiric cares about. He never asks *why*? He never inquires into the *causes* of what he observes. From what a different point of view should we contemplate the abnormal or diseased conditions of the human body, if we were first thoroughly acquainted with its normal conditions, if we had established the science of physiology on a satisfactory basis!" The great chemist, it will be observed, here places in an *à fortiori* point of view the argument I have been using, for we find him not only reproaching medical men for their neglect or dislike of physiology, but actually lamenting the want of a sufficient knowledge of that science on which to be enabled to base securely the art

of practical medicine. A want which surely no longer exists.

There are names in the profession which I could mention, whose owners have already recorded, unquestioned and unchallenged, their infinite distrust of medicine in its present state. To affirm thus much is only to notify, as it appears to me, that there are among us men of candour and philosophical enlightenment, men who seek after principle in the treatment of disease, and are not content, therefore, out of mere habit and a sluggish deference to authority, to hold on by a system in which no such general principle reigns,— and, what is of equal importance, men of courage, who will lift up their voice for reason and truth, careless of the consequences which their temerity may entail. And this being so, the greater to me is always the puzzle—why, the faults of the generally practised system being so clearly appreciated, the merits of that more recently advocated, should not be fairly tested, and the new therapeutic ideas, embodied and carried out under the term hydropathy, should not receive that counte-

nance and encouragement which may seem to belong to them of right. Want of a correct acquaintance with it, I cannot but think—the fault partly of hydropathic practitioners and writers themselves—coupled with the universally tardy recognition of new ideas, can alone explain the mystery.

Hydropathy, then, is a system of therapeutics based on a practical recognition and systematic carrying out of the organic laws of health in their entireness, as these are developed and explained by physiological science. I have already said that it required an advanced state of scientific enlightenment before men could think of building up a system of medicine on a physiological groundwork. First of all, physiology did not exist, and if it had, it would probably have been far too simple, too easily understood, to have been acceptable to the minds of those who then directed the course of medicine. At length, far on in the day indeed, Priessnitz, without any physiological knowledge, stumbled on a truly physiological method of cure, and, by his practical sagacity and energy, was un-

shakeably established that grand discovery, the greatest, in my opinion, ever made in practical therapeutics, that chronic disease is, in most cases, treated successfully by the self-same means, systematically and perseveringly applied, which are allowed on all hands to be necessary for the preservation of health. Is this not a principle which appears at least natural and probable—and should we not be thankful to have found a therapeutic *principle* at all, to have at length got hold of something like a guiding rule, a compass to steer by in a sea of perplexity?

Now, the means necessary to the preservation of health—need I recapitulate them?—air, exercise, water, diet, healthy mental and moral influences—that is the sum of the whole. Will any one be startled to hear that, whereas disease arises from the non-use, or the perverted or unphysiological use, of all or any of these agents, so in the combined and systematic application of the same means, only heightened in the degree of their administration, reside the philosophy and the practice of what is termed hydropathy? Such, however, is abso-

lutely the case. I use the qualifying terms "systematic" and "heightened," be it observed, emphatically, because here is exactly the point of demarcation between general hygiene, by the observance of which we seek to maintain the body in health, and hydropathy, or *the natural means of medical treatment*, by which we profess to cure it when under disease. It is precisely in this systematic, persistent, and *intensified* application of the natural agents of health, under due regulation, that resides the distinguishing feature of hydropathy, that which elevates it into a scientific system of therapeutics. What I mean by intensifying the means of nature's own choosing for the preservation of health, and thus converting them into therapeutic agents, is thus shortly and clearly expressed by Dr. Edward Johnson:—"I must endeavour to explain more familiarly," says he, "what I mean by intensifying the causes of health, and by intensifying the effects of nature's own contrivances for the preservation of health. Exercise is a cause of health. The hydropathic physician makes his patient take treble the

exercise that he has been accustomed to, and thus *intensifies* the beneficial operation of this cause upon his system. The skin is one of nature's own contrivances for throwing morbid matters out of the system. The hydropath makes his patient sweat more than he perhaps ever sweated before, and thus he *intensifies* the operations or effects of this contrivance of nature, the secreting apparatus of the skin. Cold is known to have a strengthening and constringing effect upon the animal fibre, sharpening the appetite, improving digestion, and strengthening the nerves, and lightening the animal spirits, while heat produces the opposite effects. Cold is therefore a cause of health. The hydropathic physician makes his patient frequently plunge into cold water, and thus intensifies the good effects of this cause of health. And so on with regard to the whole routine of his practice."*

When health fails from a derangement of the general constitution, it may be stated broadly, as an important practical distinction,

* "Results of Hydropathy," pp. 214-15, by Edward Johnson, M.D. London: Simpkin, Marshall, and Co. 1856.

that in a large proportion of cases the disease is marked by one or other of two opposite and characteristic features. Either there is a superabundance of vital power, or, in other words, a general plethora, leading, when unchecked, to congestion or inflammation, and the whole catalogue of complaints that mark an unbalanced exaltation of the system, or there is a deficiency of the same vital power, resulting in another class of diseases, equally characteristic of its degradation or decay. If, instead of speaking of diseases individually, we make use of these two grand families or groups, we shall save time, and be none the less intelligible. I hope, however, it is not necessary to state that, although with the object of brief and practical exposition, I think it expedient thus to divide diseases, I by no means intend to assert that such a division, if meant to include under one or other of its heads *every* form of human ailment, would be strictly accurate. It need only be added that, in such a sense, no division whatever of the kind is possible.

I submit, then, in reference to these two

primary classes, into which I have found it convenient, for the purpose of practical illustration, to arrange diseases in general, that both of them can be more surely and more safely treated by the varied appliances of hydropathy than by any other system whatever. Let it be understood that I confine myself at present, purposely, to a consideration of the cure of *chronic* disease, because it is chronic disease that we are called upon to treat, in the present position of hydropathy, almost exclusively; but to those who desire to learn what may be done by the hydro-pathic process (even when but partially applied) for the cure of *acute* disease, the able work of Dr. Armitage* will be found full of interest. The reader will there learn the success attending that treatment in typhus in the fever wards of the Charité at Berlin, under the eye, and with the express sanction, of no less celebrated a physician than Schönlein.

* "Hydropathy, as applied to Acute Disease." By T. R. Armitage, M.B. Lond., M.R.C.S. London: John Churchill. 1852.

First, then, of those diseases that have their origin in a plethora of the system, a disturbed superabundance of the *vis vitæ*. Let us see what are the means on which the hydropathic physician will rely for reducing the economy to a normal and healthy standard. There is first of all, as a matter of course, the regulation of the patient's diet—a means indispensable to the physician of every persuasion alike, and not to be overrated in importance. On that head I need hardly dwell at much length. Let it suffice to remind the reader, in passing, that while a vast number of the diseases with which mankind are visited, spring from insufficiency of food, perhaps a no less considerable number are due to the other extreme, excess. As applied to the upper and middle classes, every one knows this to be true, and hence the self-evident necessity of a strict regulation on that score.

The second essential in the treatment will be exercise in the open air, more or less active, according to the patient's strength and the requirements of the case, but always insisted on as far as the constitutional powers will

permit. Now what will this involve? Primarily, an increased secretion from the skin in the form of water, of carbonic acid, and of oil from the sebaceous glands, thus ridding the organism of effete and often morbid matters, (as in such diseases as rheumatism and gout, wherein the blood is tainted by a special *materies morbi*,) that served only to impair its healthy action. In the next place, we shall have a more perfect digestion, and as a consequence, the formation of better blood—that blood again, because of the accelerated action of the lungs, and the admission of more oxygen, will acquire a fresh vitality, which it will impart to the solid tissues—the circulation of the vital fluid, moreover, will be more equally distributed over the entire surface of the body, owing to the increased action of the heart and the improved condition of the skin; and from this, finally, will result a removal of congestion from the internal organs, a further purification of the blood itself, an increase of nervous power, and a general healthy invigoration of the whole vital force. If to this be added the exaltation of bodily strength, proceeding from

augmented nutrition of the muscular system, we obtain a faithful representation of the chain of results accruing from the apparently very simple process of exercise. All perfectly physiological results—for the means employed is pointed out by physiology itself. Let it only be remembered, further, that in dealing with exercise, under the natural system of treatment, we regard it as one of the most important elements of the cure, and insist upon its daily, almost hourly, use. The patient is not advised to take "a little airing;" he is ordered to walk for a prescribed length of time, and with a clearly defined and scientific object, which, it is known beforehand, is as sure to result as it is worked for; he is again and again reminded of its imperative necessity—that it is to him a *sine qua non*—that he cannot possibly be cured without it. In the word exercise, too, it is to be noted, is included not only walking in the open air, but gymnastic exercise, scientifically carried out.* Too much stress, indeed, cannot be laid on the latter,

* See an interesting account of Ling's "Swedish Exercises." By M. J. Chapman, M.A., M.D. London: H. Baillière. 1856.

which in many cases is a necessary preliminary to the former. It were to be wished that, through the agency of medical men, such a sentiment as the following fell as familiar on an English ear in our day, as on that of a Greek of old:—

“The immortal Gods have before virtue placed
The sweat of labour, and the road is long
And steep, that to it leads. At first 'tis rough;
But when you reach the top, 'tis easy all,
Although it was all difficult before.”

Thus much then of exercise, an element to the full as important as any in the system of hydro-therapeutics—exercise regulated day by day in extent, according to the case that is dealt with, and the end to be ultimately achieved.

But we have other means, in concert with exercise, to assist us in our object. We are dealing, be it remembered, at present, with cases of our first illustrative division, and have to combat an overplus of mal-directed strength in the economy. Our aim in these instances is to bring back the oppressed, overloaded system to that harmonious action of all its functions which distinguishes the state of health. We are carrying along with us,

throughout, the cardinal means of diet and exercise; to these we now add other and auxiliary applications. And first, of the vapour-bath. In many establishments the vapour or steam-bath is the ordinary sudorific. I need not describe minutely here a process which every one has seen, and most have experienced on their own persons, at some one of the public baths with which all our great towns are now happily provided. But, owing to its depurative action on the system, as well as its power of subduing a too great activity of the circulation, the result obtained is as valuable to health as it is certainly enjoyable to the sense. This bath, it is well known, is no invention of hydropathy. Not to go back to ancient times, it has been used for ages by nations whom we regard our inferiors in civilization—the Russians and Turks; to what extent and with what advantage many travellers have informed us. Of late years, indeed, and notably since the Crimean war, the Turkish bath has come to be somewhat largely used even in England. Hydropathy, it need only be said, with physiology as its guide, has adopted the vapour-bath in this

and its several other forms, as a therapeutic agent, with the very best results.

The same end of diaphoresis, or sweating, is also accomplished with great convenience by the hot-air bath, which has the extra advantage of being portable. A simple spirit-lamp, a rough deal chair, and an envelope of blankets, are all that is necessary for its administration. Further description of details is not my object, nor is it important. It is sufficient to have indicated the principle.

Lastly, we may act powerfully on the skin, on the circulation, and on the nervous system, by a method appertaining exclusively to hydrotherapy—a method, by the way, more associated in the minds of the public, for good and for evil, as characteristic of the treatment, than any other it possesses. I refer to the *pack*, or *wet sheet*. A few words will put the reader in possession of all the mystery of this process, in which, as sometimes happens, really no mystery exists. Here is its simple rationale. A single stout blanket is laid over the mattress of a bed; over this is spread a linen sheet wrung out of cold water, so as to be merely

damp. On this, at first sight, not very inviting couch the patient extends himself, and is at once completely and tightly enveloped, both in the damp sheet itself and in the heavy mass of blankets superadded. Now, what takes place? All air from without being completely excluded, and the natural heat of the body acting on the damp linen, vapour is forthwith generated, and the patient is very rapidly in a delightfully comfortable and soothing warm vapour-bath. The length of time during which he is allowed to remain in this bath will depend greatly on the effects desired. If perspiration be desiderated, we certainly cannot produce it by this method, although there is no more common error, even among hydropathic practitioners, than the belief and assertion that the pack possesses any such power.* But if we desire only to open the pores and to cleanse the skin, to lower an undue circulation of the blood, and to allay pain and irritation by a most soothing action on the nervous system,

* The reader who wishes for further information on this interesting point, will find the argument handled in all its bearings with much ability by Dr. Howard Johnson in the work before alluded to, pp. 97-104.

most effectively is this accomplished by the wet pack. It will be quite plain, to any unprejudiced mind, that in this application we are in fact subjecting the body to a general poultice, for such it really is in the manner of its action. The effects of this bath, and indeed of all the other hydropathic appliances, will depend, as stated above, on the length of time the patient is subjected to the application; but one most valuable result, in addition to those already enumerated, deserves prominence, namely, the equable distribution of blood over the entire surface of the body which is occasioned by a correspondingly equable distribution of temperature, thus necessarily causing the relief of congestion in the thoracic and abdominal viscera.

This bath, as, indeed, all the warm applications of the system (for I presume the reader will already have discovered the inaccuracy of the title—*cold-water cure*), is invariably followed by the instantaneous exhibition of one or other of the forms of the cold or tepid ablution, with the view of preventing the depressing effects that would otherwise ensue from the continued

exhibition of a high degree of caloric to the economy; and I can assure those who have never experienced the treatment, that nothing can exceed the sensation of delicious comfort which follows the processes just described. Of the real and decided therapeutic value of this agent, and of these agents combined, to which several others of a similar nature might be still added, were it my purpose to describe the hydropathic system in detail, it would be difficult to speak over-highly. Nay, it is vastly difficult to do them sufficient justice without entering into very lengthy physiological discussions, accompanied, in regard to each of the processes, by a list of cases illustrative of the minutely specific effects of each, so far as these have been ascertained with due scientific precision—and this, I repeat, would be foreign to the plan and scope of the present work. Let it only be borne in mind, therefore, that in our attempts to deal with plethora, we have to work mainly, with the aid of the powerful concurrent means of regimen and exercise in the open air, on the lungs and skin, two of the great emunctories

of the system. By increasing the action of these respectively, through the agency of exercise and the different hydro-therapeutic applications just indicated, we are enabled to relieve nature, or to assist her in doing so for herself, without the possibility of injury. But we do more. Not only are waste and morbid matters thus effectually removed from the organism, but it is of great importance to remember that these are at the very same time replaced by more healthy materials, accruing to the economy from an improved digestion, a better process of sanguification dependent on it, and a general improvement in all the functions of animal life; so that a doubly beneficial action is simultaneously set on foot, a feature most certainly peculiar to this kind of treatment.

We have been speaking hitherto of the practice of Hydropathy, with its effects, in a large and very important class of cases, where there is a morbid excess of vital energy, and where our object is to reduce the economy to its normal equilibrium. Under this head fall all those diseases and states of body partaking

of an inflammatory or plethoric character, wherein the fluid secretions, through a mal-assimilation of food, are mostly vitiated, and which are in the great proportion of cases attended with more or less of fever and pain, this latter sensation, in such circumstances, generally receiving the epithet of *neuralgia*; this neuralgia, or nerve pain, constituting, apparently, but a symptom of the internal irritation of the viscera that always exists in such cases, and being, in fact, only their effort to protect themselves by throwing their irritation on the external nerves. Among the large number of diseases to which I here refer, gout and rheumatism, so frequently conjoined (especially the former) with a plethoric state of the system, may stand as not unfitting representatives.

We have now to speak of a much larger class of diseases still, and therefore a more important one also, wherein the vital powers are not excessive but deficient—a set of cases precisely the converse of those just treated of. Here the aim is to elevate to the normal standard of health, as in the other cases it was to depress to

the same level. Any one at all acquainted with disease, or ever so little conversant with its exciting causes, must see at a glance that this must needs, in the nature of things, embrace by far the greatest bulk of the maladies that afflict mankind. We have only to consider for a moment what are the influences that conspire to lessen the bodily vigour of man in a civilized state of existence. They may fitly be divided into sins of omission and sins of commission. Sins of omission, the offspring either of ignorance of the laws of health, or of a wilful neglect of them. Sins of commission, where the laws of health are not only wittingly neglected, but where they are positively and of purpose violated in the pursuit of either business or pleasure. The same destructive agencies might perhaps also be divided into those which are forced upon mankind by the necessities and struggles of life, and those which are adventitious, or in a manner self-sought. But whencesoever arising, whether from the unavoidable over-toil of the lawyer, the statesman, or the mechanic, or from the suicidal indulgences of the man of fashion,

the result is much the same. With the habitual violation of the laws of health, advances the slow sap of the constitution—not always recognised at first, and the warning not readily listened to—but as sure in its downward progress as is the loosened avalanche. The result, I say, is the same—the prostration of the bodily, and along with them the mental, powers—the degradation of the whole man. The time at length arrives, it is to be presumed, when medical aid must be sought. And how is such a patient to be rationally treated? The task before us is to restore the vital energy—to infuse new strength into the jaded system—to tighten afresh, as it were, the strings of the economy, which had run down and lost all their tone. How is this to be accomplished? I can hardly think by the administration of drugs, of whatever kind. And yet, probably, in ninety-nine out of every hundred instances, in the present state of the medical art, it is on that surely most unsuitable plan of treatment, in cases of such a nature, that the patient will be induced to lean.

What, then, let us ask, in the species of case in question, are the symptoms we shall expect to find most prominent? First of all, it may be averred, in the great majority of instances, one of the many forms of dyspepsia, with the whole train of plagues that invariably accompany it, will be present. Sleepless and unrefreshing nights, furred tongue in the morning, absence of appetite, pain, more or less, after meals, flatulence, constipation, nervousness—such is a catalogue, and by no means an exhaustive one, of the symptoms we may make sure to find. Now, one would imagine that to any rational mind, professional or not, reflecting on such a class of diseases and their invariable causes, with an eye to their judicious treatment, the conclusion must be patent, that the laws of health having been broken, the very first step in reason must needs be to make amends at once by an unconditional return to their implicit and perfect obedience. To take an example among thousands by way of illustration. A merchant is in the course of amassing a fortune. He has begun the world with a fine constitution,

with immense ambition, and a complete ignorance that his physical powers are under the dominion of fixed laws, stern and inexorable as fate itself. He has a grand aim in view, the aim to be rich—quickly, too, if possible. The quicker the better. He is young, strong, and under the goad of a powerful stimulus. He can hardly overtask either body or mind, he thinks. And under that pleasant delusion, sure enough, matters go on swimmingly for awhile—for years, it may be. Work, work, work, the more work the more pelf—and the more pelf accumulated, the greater the thirst for more.

Creverunt et opes et opum furiosa cupido;
Et cum possideant plurima plura petunt.
Sic quibus intumuit suffusa venter ab unda,
Quo plus sunt potæ, plus sitiuntur aquæ.

Of course the man's capacity for continuing this galley-slave life will depend wholly on the amount of his constitutional powers, the stock-in-trade with which he works; and in exact proportion to these, one man will hold out longer than his neighbour; but this much may be affirmed with absolute certainty, that,

sooner or later, the most robust must succumb to the effects of such a life. Given the cause, the result must follow as certainly as the deductions in a theorem of Euclid. Now, health being gone, how shall this man recover it? He will be sure to try medicine first. It comes easiest and gives least trouble. But he will gradually discover that, in the long run, drugs will not answer. Nay, he will be getting daily worse. The dose that was effectual a week ago will not only no longer move him, but will actually aggravate the original complaint, and must be continually increased in quantity before its primary effect will be reproduced. And so matters proceed from bad to worse, the general health all the while failing, the temper going, the nervous system completely upset, the whole man fast becoming a wreck. Did it ever occur to that man or his advisers, that, in the first place, it was utterly hopeless to think of curing his disease (or chain of diseases) while the manner of life in which lay the radical cause of all the mischief was still persevered in? If that idea ever did cross the mind of either, it was not

of sufficient force, it is plain, to cope with other considerations, of convenience, saving of trouble, and the like, (and I am ready to acknowledge that, practically, these obstacles are often extremely difficult to surmount;) and therefore the unfortunate patient clings to desk and business until, the powers of life being exhausted, it is well nigh too late to look for recovery by any means whatever, however judicious.

I take the same instance to illustrate the manner in which such a case would be treated under the hydropathic or hygienic system of cure. And the point which would immediately strike the physician of the latter method as being of paramount importance, would be the necessity of at once endeavouring, as his primary principle of action, to bring back the patient to that completely healthy manner of life from which alone, in its totality, he would feel there was a prospect of effecting something like a genuine cure of the case. Accordingly, he would order, first, a peremptory release from the mental and bodily worry of business —and he would make that a *sine qua non*—

common sense itself informing him that the first step in the cure of disease is the removal of its cause, wherever that is possible. Then again, as in the former instance, the natural remedies of air, exercise, water, and diet, would be systematically brought to bear. Systematically—that is, under the immediate control of the physiological laws governing the individual case. The diet and exercise in the open air would be strictly regulated, increasing from little to more, as the cure advanced and the powers of the system warranted it. And how these most desirable ends would be expedited by the judicious auxiliary use of the various appliances of water, with their highly tonic and invigorating qualities, any one who has experienced will be in a condition to bear testimony—any one who will reflect on the subject with a mind unfettered by prejudice will understand in an instant.

My own usual plan is to commence the treatment of such a case, and indeed of most cases, with the most lenient measures, and to feel my way to a more vigorous *régime* cautiously and day by day; and this is a rule from which

no representations of the patient, who is always anxious to get well in a day, and fancies that under hydropathy it is especially his prerogative, have ever induced me to deviate. The majority of patients, it may be remarked, entirely demur to the doctrine that Rome was not built in a day; and having utterly demolished their health by the misusage of years, they fancy it not unnatural that it should be rebuilt in two or three weeks. It is a very pardonable error, perhaps, however unreasonable—but a great error it is; and the slightest acquaintance with the laws of the human economy would suffice to prevent it.* We proceed, however. The first applications of water will usually consist of a simple wash-down, as it is termed, with a couple of wet towels, the patient laving the fore part of the body, the bath-attendant the back. This may last for one or two minutes, and is immediately followed by a vigorous rubbing in a dry sheet with which the patient is enveloped. Friction is continued until a perfect reaction has taken

* "Chronic diseases, whether in the body or in the state, can only be met by chronic means."—Sir J. Forbes.

place, and the skin is in a complete glow. The clothes are then hurried on, half a tumbler, or so, of cold water is drunk, and the patient is sent out to take his prescribed exercise in the open air. The same process may be repeated two or three times per diem during the first few days, and is then followed by others of greater strength, in a continually ascending scale, but with the same object. Of these I may enumerate the dripping-sheet, the shallow bath, the pail-douche, and the douche proper. It is unnecessary to describe these baths in detail—in fact they almost describe themselves. It is sufficient to repeat that they are given for the same purpose, and differ only in form and intensity. To these varied applications of water we have yet to add the cold, tepid, and warm sitz-bath, along with the vapour and hot-air bath, and the pack, already described.

Now, what is the philosophy of these combined means of treatment in their application to a set of symptoms such as we have before indicated as characteristic of a whole order of chronic diseases? The most moderate exercise of common reflection will, I think, serve to

point it out. In the first place (and retaining still our typal illustration), the man's nervous system having become prostrated from over-work, it is plain that he must above all things have rest, and he gets it—in proportion as his case demands it, and of a kind adapted to his requirements. It will not consist largely of mere bodily rest, in the majority of instances, but it certainly will include absolute *mental* repose, so far as the physician can prescribe or secure it. Is it necessary to enlarge on the value of that? Mental rest first: with change of scene from the haunts of business or pleasure in the vitiated atmosphere of a large town, to the calm delights of a country retreat in some picturesque district abounding in pleasant and varied walks, with a dry soil under-foot, and the fresh breezes of health playing about him over-head from morning till night. Assuredly, there is a more than ordinary significance and value to the invalid, of all men, in Cowper's line—

God made the country, but man made the town.

Its moral meaning no one doubts; but physiology teaches us its immense physical import

also. The brain, then, being at rest, will speedily acquire more nervous power for the supply of all the animal functions, to whose proper and healthy action it so largely contributes. The daily experience of every one will tell him that this is so. Nay, does not the experience of each individual meal corroborate it? How differently does digestion go on when a man has partaken of food in a serene and unexcited state of mind, as compared with the workings of the same process when under the influence of mental agitation, from whatever source proceeding. And how materially is the same result affected by the conduct of the individual after meals, in relation to the question of repose or exercise. A certain amount of rest after eating is pointed out to us, alike by the dictates of experience and the laws of physiology, as indispensable; and no man will follow out a contrary rule in practice, for any length of time, without incurring a heavy penalty in the loss of health. If a striking illustration in point were required, I should be tempted to request the reader to look at the case of so large a number of the American

nation. Here is a people sprung from a common stock with ourselves, inheriting originally the same physical form and stamp, and endowed with the same distinguishing bodily and mental energies. The lot of this young giant has been cast in a land which not only gives free scope to all his natural activities, but which, from opening up so many channels for worldly prosperity, and above all things for the attainment of wealth, calls into play a more than ordinarily powerful goad to the acquisitive faculties. The very natural result has been that the activity of the nation has been, and is, tremendous, and its activities have been employed on precisely that kind of work which makes the largest drains on the nervous system—in speculation, in gambling, in excitement of every description. The consequence is, that the nation lives fast, literally. Everything, including eating, is done at a breathless pace. The jaws cannot masticate quick enough, and the food is gulped down in half-masticated boluses. Then again to immediate work, without any rest whatever to stomach or brain, and this from day to day

and year to year, so long as the powers of life will admit. But, as always happens, the Nemesis of injured Nature is visible in a hundred different ways. You have only to look at the American, indeed, and you read it at a glance. Tall, sallow, sunken-cheeked, he has already quite lost the robust British type. The compact athletic frame, and the fresh complexion, are transformed into the lean dyspeptic-looking figure, recognisable wherever you meet him as the American. Is it wonderful? To the physiologist certainly not a whit. After making, without doubt, considerable allowance for the effects of climate, he will find it difficult to ascribe the rest to any cause so powerful for evil as an ignorant, it may be, but a systematic, departure from the organic laws of health. He knows that by no possibility can a man digest his food well, who does not half masticate it, and bounds from the table to his business like a greyhound slipped from the leash. He knows, moreover, that ill-assimilated food will not make good blood, and that if good blood be not made, the tissues will not be adequately nourished, and

the general health must fail, the constitution must become deteriorated. He will recognise, moreover, that, this done in the individual, his offspring comes into the world with an unhealthy, or at least a less healthy, inheritance; and that in this manner, in the instance before us, to at least a considerable degree, has been brought about the physical deterioration, consummated with singular rapidity, which we so frequently witness in a nation of the same original stock with ourselves. This is a somewhat lengthy digression, but it is probably a more forcible illustration than any other I could have cited to exemplify the physiological importance of repose to the great nervous centre, in order to the due performance of the animal functions, and most especially that of digestion, on the healthy action of which, as already stated, such vital results are dependent.

From what has just been said, then, it will be observed that the animal economy consists of a compound organism—of a series of organs, with the functions peculiar to them respectively, interlinked, and mutually reliant the one

on the other—the whole forming a system, of which the brain, like the sun in the astronomical world, is the centre and sustaining power. For although the process of digestion, to which we have been just referring, is more immediately presided over by the nerves of the *sympathetic* or *ganglionic* system, which primarily control all the functions of animal life, yet, from the intimate connexion subsisting between all parts of the nervous system, the utmost sympathy is established and continually goes on between the brain and spinal cord and the ganglionic nerves, in the way of action and reaction. When, therefore, in the treatment of chronic disease, we have insisted on the repose of the brain, as modifying and materially influencing the general well-being of all the other organs of the economy, we have done no more than announce a well-established physiological fact. But the chief value of the fact, in this connexion, consists in its establishing a fundamental therapeutic idea, a doctrine in the treatment of chronic disease which is never to be lost sight of. And accordingly, when this general doctrine is applied to any one

individual case, like that we have been considering, it will at once explain the scientific grounds for the overriding importance which is attached to the principle of nervous repose. With the attainment of that end, it may be truly affirmed, the first grand requisite in the rational treatment of the invalid would have been secured, in the withdrawal of the exciting cause of his complaint. This might indeed with propriety be termed the *negative* portion of the process—infinitely important in itself, nay absolutely indispensable—but at once to be succeeded by the more positive physiological means already described as distinctively characteristic of the natural method of cure; these means having for their object the re-establishment of the bodily vigour through the combined agencies of air, exercise, water, and diet, systematically regulated, on the one hand, along with the restorative moral influences to be surely looked for, on the other, from change of scene, from relaxation, and the pleasures of cheerful society.

The above, it will be seen, is the merest outline sketch of the *modus operandi* of the

Natural System in such a class of cases; but it will perhaps suffice to illustrate specifically and in simple terms the general *principle* on which that system proceeds. And having reached this point, the question now naturally suggests itself—Is it possible to conceive of such a case, itself representing a whole family of kindred ones, being rationally treated after a different manner? Is it possible to imagine such a patient, while adhering steadfastly in his manner of life to the identical habits which gave birth to his complaint, to be cured by the sole agency of drugs; which may indeed often act as a spur to the economy; which have power also to reduce it, readily enough, when this is required; but which are certainly quite incapable in themselves of building it up? Plainly, it is impossible—unless we are to cast our physiology, and along with it our common sense, to the four winds, and content ourselves by adhering to the unreasoning routine of antiquated usage, fast lapsing into decay because it *is* unreasoning.

One typal example of chronic disease has been selected, not wholly at random, for in a

commercial country like ours it probably occurs at least as frequently as any other whatever. But what is true of the case of the overwrought merchant applies, of course, with equal weight to that of the overtired lawyer, or clergyman, or statesman, or doctor—to all in fact who, from one cause or another, are led to violate in their lives those eternal laws of health that are imprinted on our common nature, and the non-observance of which is sure to bring down on the offender, sooner or later, a retribution far more unerring and inflexible than the vindication of any merely human law by the sentence of any merely human tribunal.

But to some it may appear that the kind of example I have selected as an exponent of the natural system of therapeutics, in its capacity to restore the powers of the economy by exalting it—its second great general feature, according to the argument with which I set out—does not strictly fall under the category of serious disease—that it is, on the whole, of a comparatively less formidable nature, although indeed it may occasionally be marked by a total prostration of the vital powers, and in

some rare instances may even terminate in death itself. I am ready, of course, to admit that a certain distinction is fairly to be taken between mere functional disorders, however grave, (bearing always in mind, however, that their universal disposition, if unchecked, is to run on to absolute lesion of tissue), and those other more serious complaints whose tendency is to shorten life by destroying the structure of one or other of the vital organs, and hence named organic. Of the latter kind, if an illustration were wanted, it need scarcely be said that it will be all too easy to furnish abundant examples. If, for instance, we take the Registrar-General's Report of the deaths from all causes in London during the past few years, and examine the catalogue as supplied by the various diseases of the system, we cannot fail to be attracted at once by the appalling bill of mortality that marks the ravages of the tubercular class, among which the ordinary pulmonary consumption easily bears the palm. It cannot be wrong, therefore, by way of further illustration, and because of its immense importance, to say a few words

on the nature of that disease, and the evident rationale of its medical treatment. As no disease of greater magnitude could be selected, so, I am satisfied, none could better illustrate the peculiar therapeutic views for which I am endeavouring to gain a hearing.

Of the several forms of scrofula, pulmonary phthisis is undoubtedly the most dreadful and the most deadly. It is no purpose of mine, however, to dwell on its horrors, which are known to every one, and have been but too closely brought home to vast numbers of the households of this kingdom. A few words as to its pathology and treatment alone lie in my way.

Pulmonary consumption is a constitutional disease, or to say the same thing in a manner more to arrest attention, it is a *blood* disease. It occurs widely in every section of society, in the highest as well as in the lowest, though not certainly to the same extent. Nor will this be surprising when we come to inquire, as we shall presently do, into its causes.

It has been already remarked, more than once, that the state of health is only to be maintained by a due observance of all the laws

of health in their combination. That is to say, every living being, in order to be healthy, must have a sufficiency of nutritive, but plain, food, and good water; he must enjoy pure air; must take a proper amount of exercise; and, morally speaking, must, to a certain extent at least, have his mind and affections in a state of serenity and calm. Nature has enjoined that these things shall be, if the human being is to flourish, and from her ordinance there is no possibility of an escape with health; so that we see at once how it is that the richest and the poorest class alike may be attacked, although from very different and even opposite causes, by such a disease as consumption. "So long as misery and poverty exist on the one hand, and dissipation and enervating luxuries on the other," says Professor Bennett, "so long will the causes be in operation which induce this terrible disease."*

I have called consumption a disease of the blood, and essentially so it is—that is to say,

* Bennett on *Pulmonary Tuberculosis*, p. 58. An admirable work, to which I am glad to acknowledge my obligations, and to which I shall have frequent occasion to refer.

it is to a certain depraved or altered condition of that vital fluid that the disease in all its forms is due. But we have already had occasion to notice how materially the quality of the blood is modified by the state of the digestive powers. Nor can this be surprising if we reflect that, in fact, the vital stream is being constantly replenished by the products of the aliment supplied to the system, so that the quality of the one is directly influenced by the quality of the other. In this manner it follows, therefore, in the first place, that if the stomach receives a proper quantity of food, of the proper kind, and if, in the second place, the vital powers are in a normal condition, so that the process of digestion is healthily performed; then, also, will healthy chyme and chyle be elaborated, and these, in their turn, being taken up by the lacteals, and there undergoing a process of change, before being poured into the current of the circulation, will as certainly have a tendency to produce a healthy quality of blood, which again will supply all the tissues of the economy with its own nourishing and vitalizing properties. The above is a chain of

simple cause and effect. But the converse, of course, is also true. If, on the one hand, the food is either insufficient in quantity, or unwholesome in quality—or if, on the other, the digestive powers, from what cause soever, are impaired, then the process of assimilation will also be vitiated, and, as a result, unhealthy blood will be formed, and the tissues will be improperly nourished—and hence, as an infallible consequence, the deterioration or decay of the whole animal framework. No proposition can be more logical or simple.

When we say, therefore, that consumption is a blood disease, we are at once referred to the condition, in patients suffering from that disorder, of the digestive organs, and we then find, as a rule which knows no exception, that the function of digestion is, in them, in a weak and depraved condition. This state may have been induced, as before remarked, by want, or by dissipation, or by both, and there may also exist a predisposing cause from hereditary taint. But whencesoever arising, the result is still the same, and is marked by the gradual decline of the constitutional powers.

But further, modern pathology has taught us that whenever, through a violation of the organic laws of health, the constitutional powers become enfeebled, and, as in consumption, the assimilative process becomes vitiated, and impoverished blood is formed, there is always a disposition in the latter fluid, or at least in its more watery portion, the *liquor sanguinis*, on the application of any exciting cause, such as cold, to transude through the vessels into one or more of the vital organs of the body, but chiefly into the air vessels of the lungs, and to become settled there in the form of a morbid aplastic exudation, whose tendency, if unchecked, is to run on to ulceration, thus causing a serious destruction of tissue, and ending in death.

Although my primary object, in the consideration of this disease, does not turn so much on its nature, or pathology, as on its treatment, and a more lengthened reference to the former of these points, therefore, may appear somewhat irrelevant, I am tempted, nevertheless, because of the importance of the subject, and in corroboration of the sketch given

above, to avail myself of extracts from the able work of Professor Bennett already quoted. "It has been noticed," says Dr. Bennett, "by many observing physicians, and especially by Sir James Clark, that phthisis pulmonalis is ushered in with a bad and capricious appetite, a furred or morbidly clean tongue, unusual acidity of the stomach and alimentary canal, anorexia, constipation alternating with diarrhœa, and a variety of symptoms denominated dyspeptic, or referable to a deranged state of the *primæ viæ*. Moreover, it can scarcely be denied that, in the great majority of cases, these are the symptoms which accompany phthisis throughout its progress, becoming more and more violent towards its termination. Now, as the nutritive properties of the blood are entirely dependent on a proper assimilation of food, and as this assimilation must be interfered with in the morbid condition of the alimentary canal, the continuance of such conditions necessarily induces an impoverished state of that fluid and imperfect growth of the tissues. When, under such circumstances, exudations of the *liquor sanguinis*

occur, they are very liable to assume the form of tubercles; and if they are poured into the lungs, there are then produced those changes and that condition which have been denominated by the German pathologists pulmonary tuberculosis." Such is a very succinct account of the morbid process which has its result in consumption. But, again, when a closer examination is instituted into the peculiar nature of this exudation, we find that, amidst a number of most interesting particulars in regard to the chemistry of the disease, one all-important fact in regard to the nature of the tubercular exudation in phthisis has been definitely ascertained, to wit, that it consists mainly of a deposition in the lungs of albumen, the result of a highly morbid process characteristic of the disease. We learn, further, from Dr. Abercrombie and others, that "in the early stage of the disease it seems to be deposited in a soft state; that, as the disease advances, the proportion of the albumen appears to increase, while at the same time it assumes a more concrete state, and the mass in general becomes less vascular and less

organized, and that, in the last stage, the vascular structure of the organ seems more and more to disappear, until it passes into a mass presenting the properties of coagulated albumen with little or no organization."

Another most important fact to notice, is the continued tendency of this exudation, if not rapidly absorbed, to go on to ulceration—a circumstance easily intelligible from its low character, in which, according to Dr. Bennett, "there is no disposition to the formation of perfect cell-formation, but rather to abortive corpuscles, which form slowly and slowly break down."

We have, then, a clear certainty so far—namely, that in pulmonary consumption a low type of aplastic, albuminous, exudation is poured out into the lungs, with a tendency to disintegration of tissue. But this albuminous state of the *liquor sanguinis* must have its own cause. Whence then does it arise? For, if we can discover this, it will be only reasonable to infer that we shall thereby, and thereby alone, obtain the key to a true comprehension of the disease on the one hand, and of its rational

treatment on the other. Hear Professor Bennett again:—"If now," says he, "we endeavour to inquire more particularly into the nature of that change in the blood which communicates to the exudations from it those peculiar characters we denominate tubercular, we must arrive at our knowledge from the results of physiological researches. Thus, a healthy nutrition of the body cannot proceed without a proper admixture of mineral, albuminous, and oleaginous elements. This may be inferred from the physiological experiments of Tiedemann and Gmelin, Léuret and Lassaigne, Magendie and others; from an observation of the constituents of milk, the natural food of young mammiferous animals; from a knowledge of the contents of the egg, which constitute the source from which the tissues of oviparous animals are formed before the shell is broken; and from all that we know of the principles contained in the food of adult animals. The researches of chemists, such as those of Prout, Liebig, and others, point to the same generalization, when they assert that carbonized and nitrogenized—or, as they are

now called, respiratory and sanguigenous food, are necessary to carry on nutrition, inasmuch as oil is a type of the one, and albumen of the other, while the mineral matter is dissolved in both." But here follows what is more specially to our purpose. "The peculiarity of phthisis, however, is that an excess of acidity exists in the alimentary canal, whereby the albuminous constituents of the food are rendered easily soluble, whilst the alkaline secretions of the saliva and of the pancreatic juice are more than neutralized, and rendered incapable, either of transforming the carbonaceous constituents of vegetable food into oil, or of so preparing fatty matters, introduced into the system, as will render them easily assimilable. Hence an increased amount of albumen enters the blood, and has been found to exist there by all chemical analysts, while fat is largely supplied by the absorption of the adipose tissues of the body, causing the emaciation which characterizes the disease. In the meanwhile, the lungs become especially liable to local congestion, leading to exudations of an albuminous kind, which is tubercle.

This, in its turn, being deficient in the necessary proportion of fatty matter, elementary molecules are not formed so as to constitute nuclei capable of further development into cells;—they therefore remain abortive, and constitute tubercle corpuscles. Thus a local disease is added to the constitutional disorder, and that compound affection is induced which we call phthisis pulmonalis, consisting of symptoms attributable partly to the alimentary canal and partly to the pulmonary organs.” And then, as a practical final summary, Professor Bennett concludes:—

“ 1st—That an oily emulsion must be formed to constitute a proper chyle to be converted into blood.

“ 2nd—That in pulmonary and other forms of tuberculosis this process is interfered with; so that—

“ 3rd—A depraved state of the constitution is induced, favourable to the deposition of tubercular exudation into various tissues, but especially into the pulmonary organs.”

As was to be expected, this theory, like every other, good, bad, or indifferent, has had

its objectors. For my own part, I cannot help regarding Dr. Bennett's views as extremely scientific in principle, on the one side, and as tallying entirely with the great body of the ascertained facts of the case, on the other. They appear to me especially valuable, moreover, not only as offering an explanation of the disease, in itself highly satisfactory, but, above all, as yielding us a chain of causes and effects, of so positive and palpable a nature, that we are not left in doubt as to the only rational therapeutics we can adopt for its cure. And it certainly does so far appear fortunate that this disease, of all others, as if because of its importance, should be one of those which we would seem to be approaching to understand most thoroughly in its nature and its treatment — that it should appear likely to take its place as amongst the finest instances, in the whole range of the healing art, of a thoroughly investigated pathology, with a thoroughly rational and scientific therapeutic treatment capable of being founded upon and adapted to it. The only pity is, that medicine does not furnish us with a

larger number of instances of the same kind.

But the most important part of the inquiry remains yet to be satisfied. How is this terrible disease to be successfully treated? For our pathological investigations would have been of little avail indeed, if it had not been to assist us, at least, in arriving at scientific accuracy and certainty on that most vital of points.

It is a somewhat singular circumstance that the first key-note of the new procedure in the treatment of pulmonary consumption, as in the practical establishment of hydropathy, should have been struck by the hand of an amateur and not of a legitimately trained physician; for to the Rev. Dr. Stewart of Erskine on the Clyde the public of Great Britain are certainly indebted for having led the way, in a practical manner, in the rational treatment of phthisis. At a time (and that not many years ago) when the profession universally regarded the disease as being of an inflammatory character, and consequently treated it on the antiphlogistic principles of

low diet, bleeding, blistering, and antimony, with the kind of result to be infallibly expected from so fatally mistaken a practice, that gentleman stepped forward, and being led, as it should seem, by the irresistible instinct of a strong common sense, began treating some of his parishioners on the stimulant and nutritive principle, in opposition to the one just described. Beefsteaks and porter, cold bathing and constant exercise in the open air, so far as the patient's strength would allow, were made, in the treatment of the disease, to take the place of gruel and water, of leeches and blisters, and confinement to the house. His success was remarkable, and did not fail to raise a professional outcry; for the faculty had no notion of any officious meddling *ab extra*. But cures were made, notwithstanding. And if it be urged that this improvement in the treatment of the disease was no more than a happy guess, that it could not possibly be more than blind empiricism—the corresponding proposition will not fail to present itself to the mind, has a great portion of the art of medicine, up to the present time,

been anything more? Nay, further, is not the prevailing empiricism in our own day the very fault so much deplored by the best physicians living? But to return. The attention of medical men was at length forcibly drawn to this new view of the disease and its treatment; we have now apparently got at its true pathology; and there would seem, therefore, to be little doubt as to the broad principles on which its treatment should be conducted. We have seen that pulmonary consumption is in an especial manner a blood disease—that it depends primarily on a vitiated condition of the digestion—and when we come to examine ourselves on the scientific rationale of its treatment, it would appear to require no great stretch of logic to conduct us to an inevitable conclusion. The case stands simply thus. Whether through want or through dissipation, or through over-exertion of whatever kind, a human being's constitution becomes impaired, and his vitality falls. One of the very first symptoms of this vital depression is manifested in an enfeeblement of the powers of digestion. Hence the formation of bad chyme and chyle;

hence the necessary formation of impoverished blood; and hence the continued tendency, as we have seen, on the application of an exciting cause like cold, to exudations into the lungs of tubercular matter; sometimes, indeed, capable of re-absorption, but much more generally going on to softening, ulceration, and the death of the patient. I have shortly stated Professor Bennett's doctrine, that the deterioration of the blood in phthisis depends ultimately on an imperfect assimilation of the food—the albuminous portions being supplied to the system in excess by the process of digestion, the oily or fatty portions in deficiency. But be this theory wholly or only partially true, or be it even wholly erroneous, it is nevertheless absolutely certain that consumption is invariably connected with a depraved digestion. Every physician knows that this is one of the most formidable difficulties he has to contend against in the treatment of phthisical patients; because not only does the want of appetite prevent the patient from taking food in sufficient quantity to afford the system due nutriment, but, from

the depraved state of the alimentary canal, the quality of blood that *is* formed is necessarily vitiated, and therefore inadequate to perform the function of support to the economy.

It is very plain, therefore, that when we come to reflect on the rational treatment of phthisis, our thoughts must at once be directed towards the primal matter of improving the digestion. On this point there is no room for a difference of opinion, so far as theory, at least, is concerned, however widely sundered may be the actual practice among medical men.

From the time when physicians opened their eyes to the pathological error of considering phthisis, or its distinctive exudation, as the product of an inflammatory action, which of course would have necessitated the usual anti-phlogistic or lowering treatment, from that time as a matter of course, the analeptic or *feeding* treatment became imperatively demanded and universally adopted, to the utmost that the patient's assimilative powers would allow; and hence the general employment of cod-liver oil as a curative agent, from its great nutritive properties and comparative digestibility.

We have seen, however, that a very general concomitant symptom of phthisis is a loathing for food in the first place, along with an incapacity to digest it in the next—this leading to nausea and vomiting, with all the debility and discomfort they occasion. Our first great practical effort, therefore, must be to alter that state of things—to improve the digestive powers; for if we cannot effect this end, our cod-liver oils and all other nutritive attempts would surely prove abortive and useless. This also is known to every physician as the grand practical difficulty in such cases; and this brings us to consider how that difficulty is to be met. But first let us inquire what the actual practice is in this respect, and what are the means generally employed to restore the digestive apparatus in such wise as that the work of nutrition may be improved, and the life of the patient prolonged, or possibly saved. In the case of the rich (and be it observed I speak here of the practice of eminent physicians—of those who are conversant with the new pathology of the disease, and act upon that knowledge), the general course of the

treatment is somewhat as follows:—First cold in any of its forms must be sedulously guarded against, and the rule is that the patient shall be cased in flannel. In the next place, a mild temperature is much relied on, and the invalid is confined to the house, except in the very finest weather. Or change of climate is recommended, usually to the South of Italy or to Madeira, or, more recently, to Egypt. Then artificial tonics are largely given, including the different kinds of astringent bark along with the mineral acids; and the different preparations of iron are strongly recommended, with, last and most, cod-liver oil.

I might enter at some length into an examination of the effects of each of these various agencies, both as I have seen them in my own experience, and as the best medical authorities report upon them. I shall do no more, however, than state generally that, while I believe many of them have their value, others appear to me decidedly contra-indicated by a scientific comprehension of the nature of the disease. In this class I would certainly include the whole list of tonics and cough-mixtures, the latter of

which I have often seen produce the most markedly damaging effects, by undoing that which, in point of fact, we most labour to accomplish—to wit, the restoration of the healthy appetite and the healthy digestion.

“It is by no means uncommon,” says Dr. Bennett, “to meet with patients who are taking at the same time a mixture containing squills and ipecacuanha to relieve the cough; an anodyne draught to cause sleep and diminish irritability; a mixture containing catechu, gallic acid, tannin, or other astringents, to check diarrhoea; acetate of lead and opium pills to arrest haemoptysis; sulphuric acid drops to relieve the sweating; quinine, iron, or bitters, as tonics; wine to support the strength; and cod-liver oil in addition. I have seen many persons taking all these medicines, and several others, at one time, with a mass of bottles and boxes at the bedside sufficient to furnish an apothecary’s shop, without its ever suggesting itself apparently to the practitioner that the stomach, drenched with so many nauseating things, is thereby prevented from performing its healthy functions. In many cases, there can

be little doubt that this treatment of symptoms, with a view to their palliation, whilst it destroys all hope of cure, ultimately even fails to relieve the particular functional derangement to which it is directed."

Of cod-liver oil, of course, it is difficult to speak over-praisingly, *when the patient can be got to digest it*, because it certainly seems to supply the economy, in the lightest and, on the whole, the most tolerable of forms, with that fatty element which experiment would appear to show that it requires. But it is not always available, owing to the enfeeblement of the digestive powers; nay, it sometimes creates such nausea as to do positive harm. And, on the whole, it may safely be said that its exhibition is a secondary matter in the cure, *in point of time*, requiring a certain improvement in the powers of life before it can be of any utility. When that has been once accomplished, however, its value as an article of diet—for that is its true medical import—is immense, in exact proportion at once to its nutritive powers and to its digestibility.

But that, with all the means usually employed

hitherto to combat this fearful complaint, comparatively little success has been attained, is forcibly evidenced by the annual return of deaths. This holds true, as every one's experience will tell him, in regard to the higher and middle classes, who can secure the advice of the highest medical authorities, and carry out their injunctions, so far as pecuniary means are a consideration, to the letter. But if we inquire into the case of that much larger class of phthisical patients who are forced to seek relief, through public charity, in the wards of our large hospitals, we shall find that the lack of success in the treatment of these consumptive patients is so notorious and so deplorable, that in some hospitals it is proposed, from sheer despair, to exclude that class of invalids altogether. To some this may appear an extreme measure;—it is at any rate a significant one.

On referring to the statistical report of Guy's Hospital for the year 1856, I find the following statement:—That the number of patients admitted in that year, suffering from disease of the respiratory organs, was in all

455, out of whom 112, or 25 per cent., died. And I also find the accompanying, and not very reassuring, comment—"The mortality, as usual, will be observed to be highest in the diseases of the respiratory organs, the total deaths being fully double those of any other section, and furnishing somewhat more than one-fourth of the fatal cases that have occurred in the Hospital within the course of the year. By far the larger proportion of these, namely 65 (or upwards of 50 per cent.), are referrible to pulmonary consumption; and when we keep in view the little material benefit which such patients receive by their temporary residence, it becomes a question how far it is expedient to admit a class of patients merely from the urgency of their symptoms, and, at the same time, necessarily preclude others from the benefit of the charity, whose diseases might be found more amenable to medical treatment." This must certainly be regarded as an admission more candid than encouraging to him who takes an interest either in the welfare of humanity, or in the public repute of medicine. But, indeed, it is not surprising, for the plain

truth is that it is thoroughly opposed to the dictates of physiological science even to imagine that pulmonary patients could derive any very large amount of benefit from the kind of treatment they actually undergo in the wards of a metropolitan hospital, or, to put it stronger, from any course of treatment *possible* in such a locality. I say so advisedly. The prime elements of success are not there—and the enlightened physician ought to recognise this. If we have interpreted the nature of consumption aright, and if it be true that the disease, from whatever cause arising, resolves itself proximately into a morbid derangement of the digestive organs, by means of which impoverished blood is elaborated, with the tendency to transude into the lungs and form tubercle, then we must look for a natural check to the complaint in the possibility of improving the function of digestion, with the view of thereby ameliorating the blood and thus avoiding the risk alluded to.

But how will this be effected? Once again I say, by bringing into operation the combined appliances that constitute the hygienic system

of treatment. *In this way, and in this way alone.* It is by endeavouring to exalt the natural powers of the economy by means of the regulated agencies of air, exercise, water, and diet, with the addition of healthy moral influences to the utmost possible, that we can alone hope to prevent the phthisical diathesis in the first place, and to cure the complaint in the next. For that it is curable occasionally, even with only a partial use of the above means, and that too when far advanced, has been demonstrated of late years beyond a doubt. When once, by our hygienic appliances, we have succeeded in restoring the appetite and invigorating the digestive powers, so far that good substantial food can be retained in the stomach, and become properly assimilated, we may be said to have conquered the first and greatest difficulty. The cream and cod-liver oil diet, and whatever else is fortifying to the system in the way of food, may then follow with some hope of a good result; but without the improved digestive powers, of what avail can they possibly be? Hence the anxiety, as one would imagine, that must

necessarily be evinced by every enlightened man in the profession to endeavour to secure to consumptive patients the full benefit of all the hygienic means, in their entire plenitude, as an indispensable basis of operations. How far this is so, however, or can possibly be so, may be gathered in some measure from the sites of the great bulk of our metropolitan hospitals for the sick, situate as they are amid the stench of cattle-markets, the back-slums of a squalid population, or the roar of the world's highway.

I am perfectly conscious, indeed, that arguments of convenience, pecuniary and otherwise, will be cited in defence of the present receptacles for the sick, and this is precisely the best indication we have that the minds of the profession are not yet wholly alive to the importance of the hygienic or hydropathic view of the treatment of this formidable disease; for so long as the consumptive patient is denied pure air, to say no more, it is as clear as any proposition under the sun, that it is perfectly hopeless to attempt to give him even a fair chance of recovery. And in this view, the

already quoted opinion on the subject, contained in the last Report of Guy's Hospital, is perfectly intelligible. The vital question only remains, will this state of things be allowed to continue for ever as a reproach to our common profession, or shall we gradually acquire more Brompton Hospitals, pushed out *towards* the country, at any rate, where the hygienic treatment of consumption, its only rational and radical remedy, may be carried out to something of its full extent? Meanwhile it is a hopeful sign to witness the recognition of the natural principle so far as to have led to the establishment of one suburban hospital for the reception of this class of patients; and although I can by no means subscribe to many of the internal arrangements of that institution, and still less to the drug medication, especially the use of naphtha and iron, on which a chief reliance appears, although somewhat hesitatingly, to be reposed,* yet I gladly hail the step as one in the right direction, and I confidently accept

* See the First Medical Report of the Hospital for Consumption and Diseases of the Chest, presented to the Committee of Management by the Physicians of the Institution in the year 1849.

it as an omen of a still further professional advance, in the future establishment of kindred institutions in the vicinity of all our large towns, for the treatment of every form of chronic disease on the broad and infallible basis of hygienic principles.

Adopting the views of one of the most distinguished pathologists of the day as to the nature of consumption, one of the most formidable of all the scourges that afflict our race, I have endeavoured to show in a few words the simple rationale of its treatment, both on the grounds of strict science and common sense, for the one does no more than fortify the other, in this as in most other instances. But if the truth of these views shall be admitted in the case of phthisis, which we have shown to be a constitutional affection, and if it be conceded that the natural system of treatment, including, it need scarcely be repeated, cod-liver oil and all other nutritive auxiliaries, is not only the most efficacious but the sole physiological means we can employ to combat this disease successfully, whether in the way of prevention or of cure, it will surely

follow, on the same grounds, that a system similar in principle will be an essential element at least, when not of itself wholly sufficient, in the treatment of all chronic disease whatever. In this way I might go over the whole category of disease in detail, examining the individual pathology of each, and I make bold to say that the same fundamental principles of therapeutics would be found to apply throughout. But this is not necessary for my purpose. The instances which have been already cited will afford an abundant illustration of my position to every candid and reflective mind, and I could not hope to do more by an array of additional cases, however extensive. If the *principle* which forms the groundwork of the new therapeutics shall only have been clearly recognised, my purpose will have been accomplished, and it will not sound like presumption to say—*ex uno disce omnes*.

Before quitting this branch of the subject, it may be advisable to say a few words on one or two of the features more particularly characteristic of the manner of carrying out the hydropathic or natural system in practice. It

is well known that in general the peculiar treatment which goes by the name of hydro-pathy is carried on in establishments designed and set apart for that precise object; that the patients mostly reside under the same roof with the physician, and eat at the same table. It may be asked, is there any special value in such an arrangement to recommend it emphatically to the invalid? I answer, the greatest. First, it must be remembered that the site of a hydropathic establishment is invariably chosen because of its general salubrity, above all because of the purity and freshness of the air and the excellence of the water. But that is not all. A hydropathic establishment is dedicated, wholly and solely, to the purposes of health, and its internal economy in every particular is modified by that consideration. Hence the greatest regularity is observed as to the times and ways of doing everything. The patient must rise, must bathe, must eat, must walk, and must retire to rest, at fixed hours, whose observance is jealously enforced. This engenders, first of all, regularity and system, and it encourages periodicity in the action of many

of the most important functions of nature, a habit of which every physician knows the immense value. Another great advantage is, that the physician has his patients almost always under his eye—that he is thus enabled to see that all the measures of treatment he may deem necessary are carried out on the part of patient, bath-attendant, and every one concerned, in a most thorough-going manner. Moreover, being on the spot, he is in a position to discriminate with the utmost nicety the effect upon the invalid of every item of the curative process he is undergoing, and of thereby modifying the whole with something like a proper scientific accuracy. And this surely, if it entail a vast amount of extra labour on the physician, is as certainly a great and altogether unusual benefit to the patient. But I hold it, for my part, to be of an almost equal value to both.

This arrangement has its advantage, more or less, to every kind of patient that may come under the treatment, but there are some species of disease to which it is of an altogether especial value. Take the case, as an example among

many, of a patient labouring under nervous excitement from an addiction to ardent spirits. To such a man, the advantage of medical treatment in an establishment is incalculable. First, every temptation is removed from out of his path. In the treatment itself, a natural and healthy stimulus is substituted for the morbid and artificial one to which he has been accustomed; he is surrounded by good influences; and he knows that the doctor's eye watches him continually. Under the combined operation of all these means, it results that he is enabled to relinquish in a short time, and with comparative ease to himself, a habit against which he probably would have struggled in vain while living in his own home, and with no support except in the intermittent suggestions of his own unstable will.

And this leads me to point out in a single word the general *moral* value of the kind of treatment pursued in a hydropathic establishment. I say, first, that, as in the case above cited, the patient is placed in a position, physically and socially, that renders it comparatively easy for him to break off bad habits.

I have spoken of intemperance:—there is smoking, for another instance. Every one who has been largely given to this habit will know how inveterate it becomes—how difficult to relinquish under ordinary circumstances, and by the mere force of will. So also of snuff-taking, perhaps even more inveterate than the other still. And yet I have witnessed, over and over again, with what comparative facility both habits may be abandoned when their devotee is once put upon the healthy *régime* of hydropathy; and this often to the patient's own great surprise and gratification. For here, too, as in the case of the drunkard, there are physical and moral means simultaneously at work to assist in the desired end. There is the daily and almost hourly routine of the physical treatment, the bath, the constant delight of the fresh air, together with invigorating exercise, filling up the day pleasantly. There is the strong force of example, then, to assist a flagging will; the being continually surrounded by other health-seekers, all of them struggling for the same prize, and more or less earnest in a course of

well-doing. No one who has an inkling into human nature will be disposed to undervalue such an influence for good. And there is, in a general way, and as applied to cases of every description, the moral benefit to be derived from the necessity, imposed by the various requirements of the treatment, of continually sacrificing luxurious and idle tastes and habits of every kind, of overcoming the antipathy, too natural even in health, to do that which, however advantageous to us, costs a determined and sustained effort; in one word, of reconciling ourselves to the truth that health, when lost, is only to be retrieved by a laborious process, in which the patient himself is called on to play by far the principal part, and of faithfully and manfully carrying out that fundamental truth in a systematic routine, till the end is accomplished.

In this way it will be seen that the treatment may fairly be said to act as a moral no less than a physical gymnastic; and it is quite certain that it would be wholly impossible to carry that treatment out, in its entireness, except in an establishment dedicated exclu-

sively to the purpose, and organized in all respects in accordance with its requisitions.

I might speak also, in passing, of the agreeableness, in a social sense, of the kind of life prevailing at a hydropathic establishment, as a feature of undoubted import. Every one knows from his own experience the value, hygienically speaking, of cheerful and easy society. To the invalid, it is of especial moment. It lightens and brightens his way, and makes the work of his cure (for genuine *work* it is,) sit easily on him. It keeps him in spirits, prevents him from brooding over his own ailments, and is truly of incalculable value. That, too, is a benefit supplied by a hydropathic establishment, and one which, as yet, is almost peculiar to this system of treatment. Indeed, in ordinary town practice, of whatever kind, it would in most cases be quite impracticable, and hence an advantage which establishments in the country, organized as I have described, must always continue to enjoy.

I have thus endeavoured to explain, as shortly as possible, the simple philosophy of

hydropathy. I have indicated its various appliances and their several uses, to such an extent, I hope, as to make them clearly intelligible; and I have sought to impress the reader with my own strong conviction as to its efficacy and its general applicability. Do I, then, regard it as a panacea, an infallible specific for all curable diseases? It would be folly to suppose it. Without entering into a discussion on the truth or error of the doctrine of specifics, as entertained by one large class of practitioners, I may simply state that hydrotherapy rests on a totally different conception of the philosophy of the cure of disease. Its stand-point is unconnected with any such notion. Its rationale is based on one broad and distinctively characteristic idea, to wit, that nature possesses within herself, in the original construction of the living organism, her own means of restoration, when that organism is overtaken by disease; that she is constantly endeavouring to work out her own cure; that she frequently succeeds in her efforts without any external assistance whatever; and, when her powers are not sufficient

to this end, and the aid of art is to be invoked, that this aid must be founded on a consideration of the primary laws of health as unfolded by physiology, and a main reliance reposed on a systematic application of them in the cure of disease. In a word, hydropathy is grounded, as a system of therapeutics, on the belief that the mass of chronic diseases are most effectually and most safely cured, as I have more than once stated already, by the identical means, infinitely modified, of course, and intensified, according to circumstances, that are requisite for maintaining the animal economy in health.

The reliance of hydropathy, I say, is on the natural agencies of health. Its cardinal medicines are the apparently simple medicaments of air, exercise, water, and diet, which, along with healthy moral influences, compose its not very extended pharmacopœia. These are the tools with which it works, and I, for one, can answer for their efficacy. But, however generally applicable, it would not be consistent, either with science or with fact, to assert that these means will succeed in restoring health,

absolutely and independently, in every case of chronic disease that admits of cure. To say as much, would of itself be a suspicious circumstance in the estimate a rational mind would be led to form, especially if it were at all versant with the nature of disease, of any system of therapeutics, or indeed of any system whatever. Perfection belongs not to any human combination, whether in the region of medicine, or in any other. The utmost, therefore, that can be said in reference to hydropathy is, that when rightly understood, it is manifestly based, as a system of cure, on principles that bespeak the allegiance of the candid, because of their foundation on physiological law; that it certainly does work marvellous cures, and those very frequently when it is resorted to as a *dernier ressort*, by means of the natural agencies alone; and this, as is proved beyond a doubt, by the experience of every day, not only without doing damage to the powers of the general economy, but on the contrary, by reason of its ability to exalt the same, and so to enable nature to throw off the specific disease, and re-assert her own

constant tendencies towards the state of health.

All this, however, may be perfectly true without by any means involving the notion of a panacea, or anything of the kind. And surely, by the wise, such a notion could no more be expected than countenanced. But although no panacea, I do not hesitate to affirm that hydropathy, as I understand this term, and have endeavoured to explain it, is adapted, more or less, to every form of human ailment; and that even where it is of itself insufficient to effect a cure, yet it can always, and should always, be employed as the *groundwork* of all medical treatment, to which in particular instances other means may be added as auxiliaries. I make this statement the more emphatically, because it is the fashion, both amongst some medical men and a portion of the public, to assert that hydropathy is adapted to a select class of cases alone, these being, as they aver, those of patients of naturally robust constitutions, who can therefore stand with impunity a good deal of heroic treatment. Such an idea proceeds assuredly

from very great ignorance of the nature of the hydropathic method when judiciously applied. I cannot but indulge the hope that the simple and truthful explanation I have endeavoured to give of that system in the preceding pages may assist in removing such a misconception.

In the treatment of disease, then, cases certainly do occur in which, in the present state of our knowledge, we are not warranted in relying solely on the natural method of therapeutics, although we can always (and to a certain extent always do, whether we recognise it or not) employ it as a groundwork of operations or as an auxiliary. A well-known instance in point will occur to every one in the case of *secondary symptoms*, in the treatment of which, so far as the present lights of medicine go, medical men have hitherto considered themselves bound to employ such remedies as mercury or the iodide of potassium. But the application of these means to the human economy, although they do often appear to cure the specific morbid poison for which they are given, is unquestionably an evil pregnant

with results inferior only to the original complaint in their damaging effects on the constitution. Still, in the present position of the medical art, we are forced to give them; always, however, under a protest; always with the conviction that we are driving out one devil by means of another only less baleful than himself; and, I can answer for myself, always with the feeling that such practice is a slur on the scientific repute of the healing art. But having been driven into a corner, as it were, by a huge and threatening difficulty, and having been forced to do evil that good may come, (for it amounts to that,)—when we have achieved our end in the suppression of the original complaint, we have next to bethink ourselves of doing something towards eradicating the bad effects produced by our remedies. And this we cannot hope to do but by the hygienic appliances of hydropathy. Fortunately, the disease I have mentioned is one, out of a comparatively small class, in the treatment of which we are still compelled to rely on the aid of drugs, and it is not to be doubted that the time is not far distant when we shall

be able to dispense with them even more than at present.

And this leads me to make a few remarks, somewhat more definitely than I have yet done, on my own personal views in regard both to the present state of the healing art and its probable course and development in future.

It is impossible to take the hastiest survey of the medical practice of the present day, as compared with what we know it to have been even so recently as twenty years ago, without feeling satisfied that a wide revolution in opinion, and in practical procedure alike, has overtaken this great department of human endeavour. The transition and the change are constantly on the lips of practitioners who can barely yet be termed veteran. With the astonishing strides of physiology, indeed, such a revolution became inevitable. With the new physiological impulse, the usual struggle commenced between a practice founded on empiricism and old tradition on the one hand, and on science and reason on the other, and, as invariably happens, the latter is carrying the day. Physiology, in fact, has been to medicine what

the spinning-jenny has been to manufactures, only that the revolution due to the former has not been so instantaneous and complete as that of the latter, but is still gradually going on and silently bearing its fruits from year to year. The marked effect of physiology on the profession has been to draw attention more and more to the value of hygienic medicine, in proportion as the knowledge of nature's own operations has been clearly understood. And I believe I am not wrong in asserting at the same time, that along with a growing belief in hygiene has arisen a corresponding scepticism in regard to drug medication, with the modifications in every-day practice which this change could not fail to induce.

We observe the operation of this change, I say, both in a negative and, what is of much greater significance and value, in a markedly positive manner. *Negatively* it is seen, as just stated, in the extraordinary alteration in practice which is everywhere visible in the present day, to such an extent indeed as to have virtually transformed the profession, even to those who adhere to what has

been termed so inappropriately the allopathic faith and treatment in their entireness. What has now become of the incessant use of the lancet, for instance — an instrument that formed the invariable pocket-companion of every medical man, and which mistaken physiological views, if not frequently a complete absence of any, induced him to employ on his patients with a rashness astounding to the weak minds of the present day? Truly, it is scarcely ever seen, and, by the younger men in the profession, one might almost say is absolutely never used. The same may be said, to a large extent, of blistering, and of the inordinate use of the more powerful drugs, such as blue-pill, calomel, opium, the drastic purgatives, and so forth. It is a notorious fact, indeed, that the older and more experienced the practitioner, the less does his confidence in medicine, and the greater his reliance on nature, become. In a word, the heroic treatment has gone out, and has yielded, in the hands of the best men in the profession, to a mild expectant procedure, just sufficient, in many cases, to rescue its employers from the

charge of do-nothingism. In a more *positive* way, the revolution in medical creed and practice is evidenced in a growing disposition to rely with a full confidence on the natural means of cure, such as I have shortly indicated them, as the sheet-anchor in the treatment of chronic disease.

It would be easy for me, in corroboration of this assertion, to cite the opinions of numbers of the classic ornaments of the profession, many of which have come down to us in the form of pungent proverbs, well known to every medical man, and not over-complimentary to our common art, as it has been in former times. It is no part, however, either of my wish or object to place the Astley Coopers and Lawrences, the Johnsons and Parises, in the witness-box, for the purposes of a depreciatory cross-examination. Their testimony is curious, to say the least of it. It is infinitely more agreeable, however, to look at the present for its progress, than to recur to the past for the sake of exhibiting its failings, and it is still more agreeable to look forward to the advancement of the future of

medicine from the recorded opinions of some of the wisest of its present practitioners. These opinions may be fairly regarded as "signs of the times," in reference to the treatment of chronic disease, and I therefore deem it advisable to cite a few of them by way of illustration.

The first extract I shall give is from Dr. Williams's *Principles of Medicine*, a work of so established a character in the profession that it must always carry a great weight of authority along with it. He speaks of hydropathy thus:— "The reaction which follows the judicious use of cold as a therapeutic agent, may prove serviceable, not only in resisting the further influence of cold, but also to remove congestions and irregularities in the circulation from other causes, and to excite in the capillaries and secernents new actions, which may supersede those of disease. It is thus that the water-cure of Priessnitz chiefly operates, and although too powerful an agent to be entrusted to unskilled and unscientific hands, it promises to become a valuable addition to the means of combating diseases, particularly of a chronic

kind."* Now, although, as I have sought to show, what is most incorrectly termed the water-cure is in reality dependent for its success as much on other agents as water, in any of its forms or applications, and is altogether of a more catholic nature than indicated above, yet there is no doubt that, so far as it goes, Dr. Williams's view is quite correct, and it is gratifying to recognise the love of truth which, in an age of transition, with all its perplexities and jealousies, prompted the writer fairly to admit, even so far, the existence of a scientific and highly curative principle in a system of therapeutics hitherto considered as rank quackery by the professors of what has been termed *par excellence* legitimate medicine.

The next extract I shall make is from Mr. Quain's *Treatise on the Rectum*, also a standard work. In speaking of the treatment of haemorrhoids, he thus expresses himself:—
“ But how is relief, and that as permanent as possible, to be afforded in such a case? My answer is, not in the continued use of drugs, but by attention in detail to the various cir-

* Williams's *Principles of Medicine*, second edition, p. 55.

cumstances which conduce to the maintenance of a healthy state of the system. Thus:—while the diet is regulated—made more moderate in quantity, as well as less stimulating—the skin is to be thoroughly cleansed by daily ablution. Active exercise is to be taken for at least a couple of hours each day, afoot or on horseback: and the effect of this, it is to be borne in mind, is all the more salutary if a degree of perspiration accompanies the vigorous exercise of the limbs. By the action of the skin, which is one of the great emunctories of the system, and the increased nutrition of the muscles, the internal congestion, before adverted to, is removed or prevented; and a feeling of elasticity, of health, in a word, is substituted for the former feeling of heaviness and discomfort. During five years the gentleman whose case forms the groundwork of these observations has pursued this plan, taking his exercise on horseback; and during that space of time he has been free from any recurrence of the haemorrhoidal affection, as well as from (with only occasional exceptions, easily accounted for) the throbbing of his head and uneasiness down the left arm.

It is not always easy to convince people that medicine cannot safely be made a substitute for moderation in diet, pure air, and exercise of the limbs—in short, for all the natural circumstances which experience shows to be necessary for the preservation of health. To the person of sedentary habits, the aperient drug gives relief for the moment, as it not only evacuates the bowels, but also unloads the blood-vessels of the abdomen, in a degree, by exciting a serous or watery discharge from them. When absolutely necessary, and for an occasion, the purgative is as salutary as it is an efficient aid in the removal of the attack of illness. In this way it is really beneficial—not so, however its continued use. Besides, the fact is not to be overlooked, that the frequent resort to aperient medicine creates a strong desire for the continuance of the practice, owing, it is said by those who experience the effect, to the sense of 'ease and lightness' it occasions. So in time a habit is created—one, too, as difficult to be got rid of as any other habit. Our patient admitted that for several years he had commonly taken

purgative pills, with senna draughts or castor-oil, once or twice a week; and that when leaving home he used to consider medicine of that kind as much a necessary part of his luggage as any portion of his wardrobe. I have here adverted in general terms to the general plan of management, dietetic and medicinal, that it is proper to pursue. In actual practice all must be stated in detail; and it is best in most cases that the instructions for diet, as well as general management, should be written down, as well as those for medicine. Remember that, as much of the illness that is suffered is induced by the common things with which we are all constantly surrounded and influenced, so the relief and prevention of the evil is in a great measure to be obtained by the direction and control of these. Common things must be carefully attended to by the practitioner; things that are not common will command attention."* Now, in honest truth, if I were to take this passage as a fair exponent of Mr. Quain's opinions on the treatment of chronic disease, I should be disposed

* Quain on *The Rectum*, pp. 8-11.

to consider him as good a hydropath as I know. He is veritably so, as indeed, I will make bold to affirm, is every philosophical medical practitioner, in all material points except the name. I would defy any hydropathic physician to lay down a body of rules for the treatment of piles differing largely from those indicated with so much sense by Mr. Quain; only that, in addition to the all-essential natural means he recommends, the former would certainly have pressed into his service as auxiliaries, two or three of the applications of water peculiar to the hydro-therapeutic system; and to these I think it probable that Mr. Quain, to judge by the general tenor of the above passage, would be one of the last to object, either in principle or in practice.

I might further illustrate the views of the thinking men of the profession within our own day by citing innumerable passages from the works of Dr. Andrew Combe, who, as he was amongst the first labourers in the field, so he probably did more by his writings and his practice than any man of his time, to inculcate a trust in nature and natural agents in the

treatment of disease as well as the preservation of health. And to those who desire to learn what may be done for these two ends by the rational means of an enlightened system of hygienic practice, systematically and scientifically carried out, the admirable biography of Andrew Combe by his distinguished brother will afford an instructive example. I wish, however, rather to confine myself to living authors, and shall add to the foregoing selections a few of the closing sentences of Dr. Hughes Bennett's Lecture on the "Present State of the Theory and Practice of Medicine," delivered to his class in the University of Edinburgh, on the opening of the Session of 1855-56. "It is true," says he, "that the contradictory character of medical doctrine has in all times excited the ridicule of the weak-minded, and still constitutes the ground on which medicine is attacked by the ignorant and superficial. Yet the differences which exist no more prove that there is no foundation for medicine as a science, than the great variety of religious sects shows that there is no truth in religion, or than the varied decisions of our

courts of law prove jurisprudence to be a farce. All these contradictions depend upon imperfect attempts at correct theory; and this latter once rendered perfect, it will be seen that health and disease are governed by laws as determinate as the motion of the planets and the currents of the ocean. This conviction is now everywhere gaining ground, and the public are beginning to distrust the man who merely boasts of his experience in the action of his drugs, and to place confidence in him who treats according to natural laws and simplifies his remedies. Even quackery has changed its features, and instead of deluding the so-called intelligent class by the wonderful powder or universal pill, it spreads its destructive fallacies under the mask of startling phenomena, or of some therapeutic law. But notwithstanding the discouragements which knowledge has received, and will ever suffer, from the indolent or narrow-minded, at no period has the tendency to cultivate scientific medicine been more strongly manifested than at this moment. Everywhere in Europe we observe a noble effort to enlarge the foundations on which its

practice is based. Everywhere we see natural philosophy advancing—enthusiastic chemists pushing forward organic analyses—anatomists unwearied in their researches concerning development and the structure of tissues—physiologists experimenting and concentrating all the resources of modern science, in order to elucidate organic laws—and pathologists busy in connecting the symptoms observed in the living with alterations in the minutest tissues and atoms of the dead. At this time medicine is undergoing a great revolution, and to you, gentlemen, to the rising generation, do we look as to the agents who will accomplish it. Amidst the wreck of ancient systems, and the approaching downfall of empirical practice, you will, I trust, adhere to that medicine which is based on anatomy and physiology. If you now resolve to follow in the legitimate path of improvement, to which all reason and experience invite you, be assured that the toil of mastering what is now known of correct generalization will not be in vain. Everything promises that, before long, a law of true harmony will be formed out of the discordant materials which

surround us ; and if we, your predecessors, have failed, to you I trust will belong the honour of building up a system of medicine which, from its consistency, simplicity, and truth, may at the same time attract the confidence of the public and command the respect of the scientific world." There is no one who will not add a hearty amen to this hopeful and earnest wish for the future of medicine.

But by far the most remarkable and startling views that have yet emanated from the ranks of the school of old physic in reference to the treatment of disease are to be found contained in the work of Sir John Forbes, entitled *Nature and Art in the Cure of Disease*, of which a second edition is now before the public. This book is altogether a singular phenomenon, when we consider the quarter from which it has proceeded, and must certainly have fallen like a bombshell into the strongholds of conventional opinion in medicine. One is at a loss whether most to admire the candour or the daring of the man, who, in such a position, could offer such a book to the profession as the result of a long life of medical experience, with the

mature reflection of “years that bring the philosophic mind.” Nothing, it is certain, but the talismanic *prestige* of the highest professional consideration could have saved it from an overwhelming storm of abuse on the part of those whose high vocation it appears to be to keep down all rebellious attempts in the sober house of physic.

Sir John Forbes’s Treatise is manifestly the “harvest of a quiet eye,” and as such it would be entitled *à priori* to all the respect that can be accorded to it. It is the production of an intellect observant at once and philosophical—capable of taking a large grasp of facts and of generalizing correctly from them. What, then, is the conclusion to which all his observation and reflection have led this eminent physician in reference to the treatment of disease? Let one or two specimens suffice. “Such has ever been the want of trust in nature,” says our author, “and the over-trust in art prevalent among the members of the medical profession; that the field of natural observation has been to a great extent hidden from them; hidden either actually from their eyes, or virtually

from their apprehension. The constant interference of art, in the form of medical treatment, with the normal processes of disease, has not only had the frequent effect of distorting them in reality, but, even when it failed to do so has created the belief that it did so: leading in either case, to an inference equally wrong; the false picture in the one instance being supposed to be true, the true picture in the other being supposed to be false. With this impression on their minds, it was scarcely possible for practitioners not to form a false estimate alike of the power of nature and of the power of art in modifying and curing diseases; underrating the former in the same proportion as they exaggerated the latter. And the consequence has been that diseases have been treated mainly as if nature had little or nothing to do in their cure, and art almost everything. A principle so false, adopted as the ground of action, could not fail to be the source of the gravest doctrinal errors, with practical results of the most deplorable character. The great object of the present volume is to expose these

misconceptions and misappreciations, and to substitute in their place juster views of the animal economy in disease, and juster views of art's relation to it. If I succeed in effecting this object, even in a slight degree, so as to impress the minds of some of the younger and less prejudiced members of the profession with the truth and importance of the principles advocated, I can entertain no doubt that a great good will thereby have been gained for practical medicine."

Again: "The object of the work is not simply to exhibit in an independent manner the general fact of the respective and relative powers of nature and art in curing diseases, but to establish the more special fact that nature possesses vastly greater powers than art in curing diseases, and, consequently, that its extent is beyond the common belief of the junior classes of medical men, and men in general."

Once more: "Perhaps there is hardly anything in the whole range of ordinary everyday knowledge—that is, knowledge with which every one is more or less conversant and familiar—which is so little understood by men

in general as the real nature of the medical art, and its actual power in ministering to the relief and cure of diseases. Respecting this latter point, its power, the ignorance of the lay public is generally extreme. The belief commonly entertained is that, in the vast majority of the cases of disease in which the patient is restored to health, the principal, if not the sole, agent in this restoration is the artificial treatment, that is, the drugs and other remedies, prescribed by the medical attendant. By such persons nature, or in other words the inherent powers of the animal economy, are either entirely ignored as having any share in the result, or their share in it is regarded as extremely slight and unimportant.

“ In acute diseases of short duration, more particularly, as in many fevers and inflammations, the abatement of the severe symptoms which often ensue speedily after the administration of remedies, is invariably attributed to the active measures had recourse to in such cases; a conclusion which, however false, can hardly be wondered at under the circumstances. When the observer sees bleeding, blistering, vomiting, purging, and all the other heroic

arms of physic brought into action against the disease, with the avowed object of curing it, and when the disease is seen to abate or disappear within a short period after their employment, the inference seems inevitable that the artificial treatment was the exclusive agent in effecting the cure.

“ In chronic diseases, especially those of long standing, the apparent demonstration of art’s powers is not so striking; and still, in the prevailing ignorance of there being any other agency to explain it, the result is as confidently set down to the treatment as in the other case. So general, indeed, is this belief, and the confidence in its validity so strong, that it is rarely shaken, even by the most untoward events. In the most obstinate and prolonged diseases, extending, it may be, over months or years, if the patient at length gets well, the medical treatment still receives the credit of the cure; and the physician, if he has continued to preserve his patient’s confidence throughout, is sure to be lauded for his knowledge and skill, in having been able so long to make art hold its ground against so severe and

obstinate a disease, and finally triumph over it."

Sir John goes on to express his want of surprise that this mistake should be so prevalent among the lay public, and he even thinks that, all things considered, its almost universal existence among medical men is as easily accounted for. "When all the circumstances hostile to the attainment of truth in this particular are duly weighed, I think it will be admitted to be scarcely possible for even the most philosophical student to escape their unhappy influence in the first instance, or to get completely rid of it afterwards.

"If the influence is ever wholly overcome, I believe it can only be through the teaching of a long, well-sifted experience, directed and enlightened by an independent spirit, and a due endowment of that philosophical scepticism, comparatively so rare, but essential to all scientific investigation. The mind of ordinary or inferior power, here as elsewhere, can scarcely ever escape from the conventional thraldom in which it has been nursed."

Finally: "However favourably we may look

on remedies, and although we may admit their validity in many cases, they can at most be regarded, in relation to the case of most diseases, only as the voice, hand, whip, or spur of the rider to the progression and course of the horse: they may stimulate or excite the natural faculties to do the work which they themselves have no power to do; they may possibly, also, regulate or direct the course of action of the natural faculties (as the rider guides his horse) so as to force them to a speedier, or even a different issue; but the essential agency in both cases is exclusively in the individual organism, not in the extraneous spur;—the muscles of the horse in the one, the *vis medicatrix* in the other."

I might go on to quote from this admirable work at great length, and the temptation to do so is strong. Agreeing, however, as I do so heartily, with the general tenor of Sir John Forbes's ideas both as to the nature and course of diseases, and as to the general efficacy of nature in working her own cure, I am not prepared to go all lengths with him as to the comparative inutility of art. But first it

would clearly be necessary to define the precise meaning of that word, to establish precisely in what art consists. If by the term "art" Sir John Forbes means to signify the system of drug medication as practised by so large a number of the medical profession, I entirely agree with him; but this would manifestly be to confine the term within very narrow limits. It seems plain, on the contrary, that unless some such arbitrary and restrictive significance be employed, the term must be held to include every species of attempt to modify or control disease, whether such attempt consist in the administration of powerful drugs, or whether it proceed, as in the case of the hydro-therapeutic mode of treatment, on the principle of combating disease by the systematic use of all those natural agents which we group together under the one title of hygiene. This consideration, to say nothing of its scientific truth, is not to be overrated in practical importance; for if the medical art had nothing better to fall back upon, or to look forward to, than simple negation,—if it were, in the future, compelled to content itself with playing the part

very much of a mere spectator of the course of disease, and nothing more,—such a state of things would undoubtedly go far to justify all the reproaches its enemies are ever so prone to heap upon it. How little however, for my own part, I anticipate the risk of such a result, will be apparent to every one from the preceding pages.

But the main object I have had in view in quoting so liberally from Sir John Forbes and others, has been to demonstrate the channel in which, more or less, the opinions of the advanced thinkers in medicine appear to be running in our day. Clearly it is towards the abandonment of the old conventional empiricism in practice, and it is towards establishing on its ruins a system of therapeutics, by whatever title it may be designated, based on anatomy and physiology.

We spoke of the apparent medical tendencies as exhibiting themselves in a negative and more positive manner, and the express sentiments of the authors I have cited have been adduced in evidence of the latter of these tendencies. I might notice other indications.

If I am not misinformed, it has been under consideration to establish in King's College a Chair of Hygiene as a necessary branch of medicine. There has already been organized, and there is now ably supported, a quarterly journal of hygienic medicine, under the editorship of Dr. Richardson, with a staff of orthodox medical practitioners, whose function must necessarily be to regard disease and its treatment from the hygienic or natural-means point of view. I have already noticed the establishment of Brompton Hospital in one of the healthiest suburbs of London;—on what principle, or for what cause, if not from a recognition of, and a desire to carry out in practice, to a certain large extent, the hygienic conditions of cure?

And now, with such indications as these before us, have we the data to enable us to form a rational judgment as to the probable medicine of the future? On taking a retrospect of the past, we have seen that the practice of old physic consisted, as was most natural, in great part, of a conventional routine, handed down from generation to generation by tradi-

tion, and grounded on the results of tentative experiment alone, irrespective of scientific principle. That practice dates from the first dawnings of the art, through the whole progress of its history, right into the heart of the present generation. But it has received a palpable check, and it may safely be asserted that, as an independent and exclusively self-subsistent system of therapeutics, monopolizing the whole art and profession of medicine, it is for the future wholly impossible. If this be so—and if we are to judge from the history of therapeutics during the past twenty years, and more especially from the indications it presents in our own day—there is but one conclusion, I think, at which we can possibly arrive in estimating the direction in which scientific medicine is tending. Manifestly it is towards abandoning the empiricism of the past and rearing on its ruins an art whose foundations shall be deeply laid in anatomy and physiology. If any faith in the final triumph of truth be left among us, this result cannot be doubted for a moment.

Now, the main object of this essay has been

to show that hydropathy, or the treatment of disease by the natural agents, is precisely such a system in every essential particular, whether it be called by that name, or by the more correct title of the physiological practice of physic, or rational or hygienic medicine. And it is therefore my conviction that it must ultimately take its place as the indispensable basis of all medical practice. That is the position I claim for it, and I must repeat that I am anxious to draw a more especial attention to this fact, for the reason that even those who approve of hydropathy so far—men like Dr. Williams and Sir John Forbes—appear to regard it rather in the light of an auxiliary to drug-medication at best, and as being adapted to but a limited number and kind of cases. There cannot be a greater misconception. This is a cardinal point on which, with great submission, I would join issue with these distinguished authorities. My view of the matter is precisely the converse of theirs; and I assert fearlessly that if hydropathy, rationally understood, be conceded to be identical with hygienic medicine, and founded on

physiological law, then it must necessarily form a part of the treatment of every case of disease, and more, it must of necessity form its groundwork. This is saying the very least. When that is done, it remains to be added that the natural agents will of themselves suffice to cure in the bulk of curable chronic affections; while I freely allow, nevertheless, that numerous cases do exist, not only where drugs may be given with advantage, but where, in the present state of our knowledge, they are absolutely essential. And indeed one might safely forecast that this will be the final arrangement of parts as regards the elements that go to make up the medical art. More and more, as we have seen, the minds of the ablest thinkers in the profession, and of the men of the largest experience, are drawn into an increased reliance on nature and the means of her own choosing for the maintenance of health and the cure of disease. Hear Sir John Forbes again:—"The conviction of the great autocracy of nature in the cure of diseases is much more widely spread among the senior members of the

profession than is at all believed by the great body of practitioners. It is this conviction, influencing their proceedings, that so often makes the practice of these men obnoxious to the charge of inertness from their younger brethren. They are accused of being as inactive as 'old women,' and are indeed accounted as such by the whole band of heroes fresh from the schools, as well as by those of maturer age, whom experience has never taught to doubt respecting the conventionalisms of their early training. It is as an old member of this inert fraternity, and as the expositor of doctrines sanctioned by their opinions and practice, that I have ventured to take upon myself my present task; and I feel assured that, if I were allowed to adduce the many eminent names who join with me in opinion, whether from the ranks of living or dead physicians, the doctrines I venture to promulgate would meet with much readier acceptance from the profession and the public than they are likely to do under the authority of any individual. At any rate, I must be allowed to appeal to the enlightened experience

of such men, as one of the most fruitful and valuable sources of evidence in behalf of the truth of the proposition under consideration—to wit, the great and extensive capacity of nature to cure diseases, with little or no assistance from art." And so on *passim*.

The plain truth is, indeed, that between the opinions of such men as Sir John Forbes and those of the practitioners of scientific hydrotherapy the difference is, in a great degree, merely nominal; and it is my very firm belief that if the "inert fraternity" he alludes to had been somewhat younger men when hydrotherapy was first practically set on foot, or if that system had originated with a man, or men, of science, and had been in its first beginnings free from many of the extravagances which defaced it, these gentlemen could not have consistently refused to embrace its principles, identical as these are with their own, nor its practice, conformable as it also is with theirs, except in so far that, being as it appears to me equally natural and scientific, it is also much more positive. The hydropathic physician, it must be allowed, recognising the

enormous value of hygiene, at least makes the attempt to carry it out in his treatment. He cannot be accused in the smallest sense of saying—*Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor*; nor is he by any means content with mere negation.

But it is to the rising generation assuredly, as Dr. Bennett has well said, that we are to look for the large reform in medicine. Youth is naturally progressive—age is as naturally distinguished by conservatism. The latter quality may have its own great uses when rightly directed, and it will always retain its value in medicine as in politics; but it must ever be yielding, in the one case as in the other, before the superior force of progress. Hence, although we may hail with infinite satisfaction the declaration of Sir John Forbes, that his own therapeutic views are largely entertained by the veteran magnates of the profession, we must be well aware that these heretical notions *are* confined to a small band of independent thinkers, and are looked at more than askance by the great body of the routine practitioners who graduated forty

years ago. It is to the young men of the profession, therefore, that we must chiefly trust for carrying out the work of medical reform. And indeed, if I were to relate my experience of the opinions of the thinking portion of medical students in my own day, which I took great pains to ascertain, I should say that the work of reform, so far as it depended on them, would proceed at a rapid pace, but for certain practical drawbacks. In nine cases out of ten these young men, as I found, were extremely sceptical as to the value of drugs, and as thoroughly impressed with those physiological doctrines which, if carried out into practice, would have led substantially to the adoption of hydropathy. Nor is this wonderful, for it always appeared to me that, apart altogether from the lessons that reflection and experience might teach, a student had only to listen to a course of lectures on *Materia Medica*, however ably the subject might be treated, in order to become at once struck with the highly unsatisfactory nature of the implements he is called on to work with. With a few grand exceptions, is it not, in all candour,

a uniform history of remedies that appear, in many cases, to have been selected at haphazard, that have had each its day of popularity, and finally become as much neglected as they were originally puffed to the skies?

The uncertainty, indeed, that must always attend the effects of drugs, even in the most favourable cases, is infinitely greater than is at all suspected by those who have not inquired minutely into the matter. The subject, as a branch of the important consideration of evidence, is set forth at length by Mr. John Stuart Mill, with his usual lucidity and power, in the tenth chapter of his *Logic*, wherein he treats of plurality of causes in producing results, and illustrates the difficulty of tracing effects to their true causes by a reference to no less startling an example than the action of mercury in disease. Few medical men will have any misgiving in that quarter, of all others, but hear one quotation:—"When an effect results from the union of many causes, the share which each has in the determination of the effect cannot in general be great; and the effect is not likely, even in its presence or

absence, still less in its variations, to follow, even approximately, any one of the causes. Recovery from a disease is an event to which, in every case, many influences must concur. Mercury may be one such influence; but from the very fact that there are many other such, it will necessarily happen that although mercury is administered, the patient, for want of other concurring influences, will often not recover, and that he often will recover when it is not administered, the other favourable influences being sufficiently powerful without it. Neither, therefore, will the instances of recovery agree in the administration of mercury, nor will the instances of failure agree in its non-administration. It is much if, by multiplied and accurate returns from hospitals and the like, we can collect that there are rather more recoveries and rather fewer failures when mercury is administered than when it is not; a result of very secondary value even as a guide to practice, and almost worthless as a contribution to the theory of the subject."* I have quoted this passage from so eminent

* Mill's *Logic*, fourth edition, vol. i. p. 486.

a master of reasoning as Mill, to show what arguments can be fairly used on the subject as a matter of pure logic. I cannot but think, however, that Mr. Mill, how ably soever he has stated the difficulties which beset these inquiries, has somewhat overstated the case in this instance, and that the ordinary view entertained by the profession, which ascribes to certain drugs, (as for example to this very mercury in iritis, to quinine in ague, to copaiba in blennorrhagia, and others that might be cited), a well-established specific influence over certain forms of disease, is the truer one.

But if the treatment of disease by drugs is thus beset with difficulties, even when the drugs are obtained pure, an additional argument against their over-prevalent use is surely found in the extraordinary facts which analysis has of late years brought to light, showing that adulteration goes on in so wholesale a fashion that it is next to impossible to procure medicines of genuine quality and strength. How strangely, for instance, to the young aspirant in medicine must such a statement as the following sound, taken from the report of

Mr. Simon on the sanitary condition of the city of London in the year 1854. He says:—
“ It is notorious in my profession that there are not many simple drugs, and still fewer compound preparations, on the standard strength of which we can reckon. It is notorious that some important medicines are so often falsified in the market, and others so often mis-made in the laboratory, that we are robbed of all certainty in their employment. Iodide of potassium, an invaluable specific, may be shammed to half its weight with the carbonate of potash. Scammony, one of our best purgatives, is rare without chalk or starch, weakening it perhaps to half the intention of the giver. Cod-liver oil may have come from seals or from olives. The two or three drops of prussic acid that we would give for a dose, may be nearly twice as strong at one chemist's as at another. The quantity of laudanum equivalent to a grain of opium being, theoretically, 19 minims, we may practically find this grain, it is said, in 4.5 minims, or in 34.5. And my colleague, Dr. R. D. Thomson, who has much experience in these matters, tells me that of cala-

mine, not indeed an important agent, but still an article of our *Pharmacopœia*—purporting daily to be sold at every druggist's shop, there has not for years existed a specimen in the market.”* When to such an exposé as this is added the yet more recent testimony of Dr. Hassall, based on the most careful and accurate scrutiny of the subject, who shall wonder if the young student should feel distrustful of an armoury whose weapons of offence against disease, he is duly informed beforehand, are not only uncertain, but in too many instances absolutely spurious and worthless? In plain truth, this is not unlike jesting with a subject wherein, of all others, a jest is lamentably out of place; and yet, amidst this sad imbroglio of inaccuracy and confusion, patent to all the world, and sorrowfully confessed by the best men in the profession, the individuals are not wanting who burn with zeal to dub with the ever-ready “quack,” the honest inquirer that endeavours to quit such slippery ground for a more secure footing on the *terra firma* of physiology and common sense.

* *Reports relating to the Sanitary Condition of the City of London.* By John Simon, F.R.S., &c., pp. xxi. and xxii.

But independently of the odium that attaches to every member of the profession who has the hardihood to step ever so little aside from the well-beaten track of routine, in the general case the young practitioner has to encounter a more formidable lion still in his path, the moment he quits the walls of the university; for the very simple question then forces itself upon him—how is he to get his bread? It is not with him a question of what practice or what opinions are true, but what will yield him a livelihood? That is the grand touchstone. If the public are unenlightened, enlightened opinions on the part of the practitioner, instead of assisting him, will only stand in his way. And the plain truth is that the ordeal is too much for most men. Science and independence are no doubt very grand things, but they require a little solid backing in the form of rations—and, failing this, the man is to be excused who declines to starve in their cause. And thus it is that the great proportion of young graduates in medicine have no choice but to enlist themselves, for the pure sake of a livelihood, in the ranks

of ordinary routine, until very often at last they are brought, through the force of habit itself, to believe quite conscientiously in those very remedies, or at least to prescribe them without hesitation, which they originally mis-doubted, or even despised. To such an extent are we the creatures of circumstance.

Such a state of things, however, suggests serious reflections, of which not the least serious, to my thinking, is this—that until the general public become better educated in matters pertaining to health and the general principles of medicine, there is comparatively little hope for any speedy advance in the reform of medical practice. That this will ultimately take place, to such an extent as to enable them to form rational opinions on the subject, and to discern at least between truth and conventionalism, charlatany and genuine enlightenment, no one can doubt. The importance of the subject is gradually pressing itself on the minds of all thinking men, and although physiological instruction has not yet taken a systematic form as a necessary branch in the curriculum of an ordinary education, there can

be no question that a fair beginning has been made; and such appears in our day to be the rapid extension of ideas that are founded on truth, that there is no room left for a misgiving as to the chance of their ultimate and complete prevalence. And this much at least may even now be safely predicted—when the clear and broad doctrines of hygienic medicine have once fairly been taken hold of by the public at large, woe to the practitioner who fails to give them their due weight in the rationale of his medical treatment.

It is most certainly by this means, amongst others—by this *vis a tergo*—that the medicine of the future will be modified. But however large may be the adoption of hygiene into medical practice, drug medication, more especially in the treatment of acute diseases, will, I doubt not, always retain its value;—nay more, may always continue to be in very many cases indispensably necessary. The only point that remains to be urgently contended for is to confine it to this, its own appropriate sphere, and not to permit it to trespass beyond those limits which science and the

best experience together have prescribed for it.

I believe, moreover, as before stated, that the medicine of the future must of necessity be ultimately built up on this foundation; and on none other will its stability be possible. Persevering, with the aids of chemistry and pathological anatomy, in the course of a most searching and continued investigation of the nature and symptoms of disease, and acquiring thereby, more and more, a decisive mastery in diagnosis, the science of medicine, so far as treatment is concerned, must assuredly take its stand on the groundwork of hygiene, in its broadest sense; but it must also be armed with all the auxiliary resources of the Pharmacopœia, to be applied in their proper seasons, which an accurate and wide investigation of their effects (such an investigation as even the splendid labours of Christison and Pereira have not rendered uncalled for) shall have justified. Nor will this be any new union. The intuitive mind of Greece, ages ago, apprehended the wisdom and the necessity of such an alliance, which was commonly typified on

their marbles by representing Æsculapius and the goddess Hygieia standing hand in hand beside an altar, to which they appear to be offering their joint and common contributions of service. Such a representation may still be seen by the curious on a bas-relief in the Louvre. And surely this co-operation, thus early and thus presciently suggested to the world under the above emblem, will come ere long to be finally established, not only as a scientific necessity, but as a great practical professional movement. The interests of medicine demand this reconciliation, and the interests of mankind demand it no less. That it will eventually be brought about, is as certain as the infallible realization, in due time, of all truth; but it is the solemn duty, nevertheless, of every member of the profession to help it on, meanwhile, by every means in his power. Yet this will assuredly not be achieved without considerable sacrifice of individual opinion on every side. And even when it *is* accomplished, there doubtless will still be a large divergence in opinion and in practice—the natural and

physiological, or the conventional, preponderating, in every instance, according to the bias of each practitioner. The holders of different views, however, in such a science as medicine must learn to give and take, and must be mutually tolerant. Medicine does not enter amongst the *exact sciences*, and there are many considerations which will always deprive it of any title to mathematical precision. Within certain limits, therefore, and those wide enough, as all experience proclaims to be necessary, there is not only room for legitimate differences of opinion, but they are plainly inevitable, if indeed they are not also salutary. This is the case, as every one knows, with professions where much greater certainty is attainable than in medicine. Look at the Church—and consider its divisions and sub-divisions without end—and reflect what the fate of even so small a section as the Established Church of England must have been, if, assuming a rigid standard of orthodoxy and insisting on one only interpretation of doctrinal difficulties, her policy had been to expel from her bosom every one of

her children who was found dissenting ever so little from this standard. Had such been her course, it is certain that the Church of England would, long before this, have arrogated that title to herself very presumptuously and very untruly, for she must have been a wreck of which the fragments were scattered on many an alien shore. She must have been literally rent to pieces by schism, for it is notorious, from the events of even the last ten years, that within the pale of the Church, and therefore, it must be presumed, under the banners of orthodoxy, are men who differ from each other, not simply on trivial, but on the most cardinal points—and yet they are all churchmen. In this toleration the Church has evinced her great wisdom, and I am not aware that the spiritual interests of the people of England have suffered therefrom. The profession of medicine has no proper hierarchy, like the Church; and the body that are supposed to represent its orthodoxy have no power to exclude from its ranks any legally qualified member who may differ from them either in theory or in practice. But that is

far from sufficient. As before said, within certain limits, and even these not over-rigidly defined, a large toleration is to be exercised, in the interests of truth and of justice together, by all the members of the profession towards each other. We are all fellow-workers at the same difficult task. One man considers that he can achieve it in one way, while another, taking a different stand-point, is forced to come to different conclusions theoretically, with a corresponding difference in practice. In the name of common sense and common fairness, an appeal which should not be made to Englishmen in vain, let them both have free scope for their individual views and efforts. Who shall say which is right? Probably—nay, almost certainly—truth will belong absolutely to neither, but will lie between them; although, of course, it may greatly preponderate on the one side over the other.

One of the chief purposes of this essay has been to claim this much, at least, for hydrotherapy. First to endeavour to explain it, then to ask at the hands of unbelievers toleration, if not acceptance. I, for one, can truly say,

that I was led to adopt the system, not because of its novelty, but honestly because it appeared to me to be by much the most palpable and completely organized effort I could discover, in any quarter, to carry out systematically those great physiological principles in the treatment of disease which struck me, very early in my studies, as the natural foundation of all therapeutics. On a more extended knowledge of hydropathy, derived from the practice of it as a physician in a large variety of cases, I have seen no reason to change my opinion of its worth. On the contrary, what was only theory in the first instance, and as such, not wholly to be relied on, has come to be consolidated by the lessons of experience, which cannot be doubted or set aside.

But, with such convictions, it would be strange if I did not, before parting with the subject, go a step further and express my deep and earnest hope that the system I have been endeavouring to advocate will at least be taken on trial (for that is all I ask) by the great body of the Medical Profession. In the first place, let the accident of its practical in-

truction by a German farmer be dismissed from every candid mind, and let the sole consideration be—is it founded on physiology, and, consequently, is it *true*? Many have turned aside from examining it, doubtless, under the belief that it is not available in town practice. But this is a very grave mistake. I will not go the length of saying, indeed, that hydropathy can be practised, in its entireness, with *as great* success in town as in the country. Manifestly, that cannot be, were it only for the reason that the patient cannot have in a town the benefit of the best of tonics and restoratives—pure air—which may truly be called the right arm of the hydropathic treatment. But, notwithstanding, an amazing deal may assuredly be done by this system of practice, even in the very worst localities. First, in the *prevention* of disease, by introducing amongst the general population a knowledge of the laws of health—a kind of information on which, whatever be its importance, the most deplorable ignorance continues to prevail amongst all ranks and classes. It is the very first duty of the medical prac-

titioner, as the Priest of Health, in virtue of his vocation to make head against this ignorance, and every medical man should consider this as constituting a very large portion of his duty, as it undoubtedly will be one day considered. But also in the *treatment* of diseases, especially those of a chronic character, the various hydropathic appliances may be adopted in town practice with the greatest success. For what is it I am urging on the acceptance of the profession? Is it any strange doctrine, any cunning alchemy, mysterious and occult in its nature and workings? Entirely the reverse. I simply ask them, consenting to regard the treatment of disease, experimentally, from a different philosophical point of view, to make trial in their practice, in a much more systematic manner than has at all been done yet, of the laws of physiology that were expounded to them from the professor's chair, —to satisfy themselves, in the way of experiment, if the vast bulk of diseases be not curable not only more speedily but more safely (and I am sure much more agreeably to physician no less than patient,) by the system of hygiene

than by the exclusive administration of drugs. Let the trial but be made, and I do not fear the result. It will then be discovered that the treatment of disease, on the hygienic principle, is not only perfectly available in town practice, but will prove not very many degrees less successful than in its most chosen abodes in the country. The truth of this I have almost daily means of discovering, practically, through the experience of my own patients, who often, for months after they leave me, carry on with advantage, in their own homes, the system they had begun under my more immediate direction. For after all, town or country, in a large proportion of cases the invalid is able to walk, and may therefore take exercise;—even in London he may obtain good water to drink; he may have the benefit of the bath in all its forms; and he may be subjected to a similar regulation of diet as in the establishments more specially dedicated to the pursuance of the entire treatment in its most thorough and systematic form. When all this is considered, it will be seen that the hydro-pathic system is in all respects feasible, to say

the least, in the ordinary practice of medical men in town. Let a beginning but once be made, in a spirit of candour and with a simple eye to the discovery of truth, and I am satisfied that self-interest alone, arising from the success that must attend the experiment, will ultimately crown it with success. From the adoption of the hydropathic method by any large number of the leading men in the profession in their private practices will result its introduction into the wards of our large hospitals,* and from that day may be dated its final establishment as at least the *groundwork* of the Medical Art, whatever else may be added to it in the way of auxiliaries. For in fact the sum of the whole argument, and the true difference between medicine as ordinarily practised and the therapeutic system I have striven to advocate in the preceding pages, reduces itself simply to this;—that whereas, under the former, hygiene, with its manifold appliances, is regarded merely in the light of

* I am glad to be able to state that this is now being done in more than one of the chief hospitals in Paris, where the wet sheet and other hydropathic appliances are largely used, especially in the treatment of fevers and acute rheumatism.

an adjunct in the treatment of disease, waiting upon drug-medication as its handmaid, yet certainly accounted of considerable importance; —under the latter, the case is just reversed; and while all credit is by no means withdrawn from drugs, wisely and sparingly used at their proper time, to hygienic treatment is assigned by far the first place (in dealing with chronic disease, at least), in virtue of its superiority as a philosophical system, having its firm foundation on physiology; and, as a corollary from this, because of its greater efficacy in combating the vast majority of diseases, by exalting the *vis medicatrix*, and thereby placing Nature in the most favourable circumstances to cure herself, which she is ever seeking to do, when the balance of health is disturbed.

I have now explained the manner in which I understand hydropathy — as identical, namely, with the natural or hygienic system of therapeutics. I began this treatise by taking exception to the *name* hydropathy, which must, I conceive, eventually pass away and become merged into something broader and better; and I have fully announced that

I do not consider it, in the very smallest degree, as a panacea. But taking it for what it really is, I say again fearlessly, that no unprejudiced mind of any intelligence can fail to recognise its truth and its importance. And I most earnestly look forward to its adoption by the medical profession as a step that will supply a clear, simple, and yet scientific principle of procedure, in a region where a scientific principle is sorely needed—as a measure not revolutionary, but truly conservative—tending to supply a backbone of strength, where it, too, is much required; lastly, as an inestimable boon to that public whose ever-advancing intelligence will enable them, more and more, to lay hold of the large results achieved in all the sciences, even if they do not comprehend the processes through which these have been attained, and who, if not guided in the pathway of truth by those whose more special function such guidance may be, will assuredly before very long take up the torch and lead the way themselves.

THE END.

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21



